

FREE RED DWARF MAGAZINE

A 36-PAGE
CELEBRATION OF
A SCI-FI CLASSIC

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THE END TO
THE BEGINNING
THE FIRST 2P
AN SFX

279

**SERIES XI
EXCLUSIVE!**

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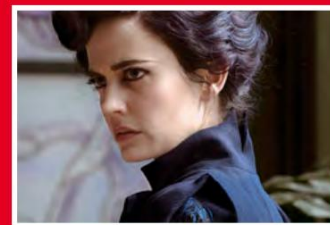
STAR WARS: ROGUE ONE
The latest trailer dissected



BLAIR WITCH
Inside the surprise scare sequel



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MISS PEREGRINE
Tim Burton embraces the Peculiar

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THE EXORCIST ◊ THE WALKING DEAD ◊ GOTHAM ◊ THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS ◊ CHRISTOPHER PRIEST

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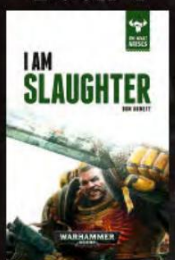
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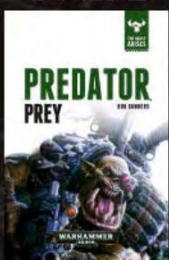
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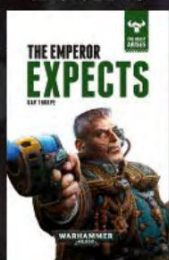
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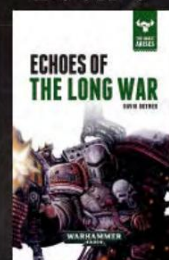
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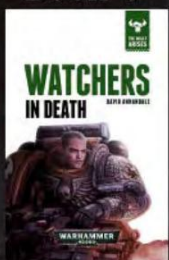
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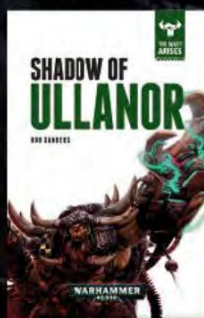
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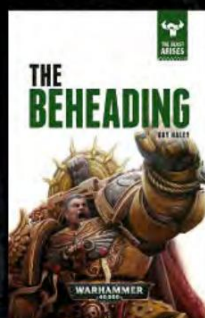


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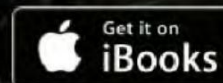
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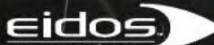
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**RED DWARF**
"It's like the old days, really"**THE FLASH**
"There's another Flash out there..."**MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME
FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN**
"There's that dark pit inside that
just stays with you"

FEATURES

44 RED DWARF

As the team return once more, we've been sneaking around behind the scenes.

52 THE FLASH

On your marks; get set; GO to our feature on the Scarlet Speedster's latest adventures.

56 MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN

Tim Burton's latest is as peculiar as you like.

62 DAVID MAZOUZ

Young Bruce Wayne gives a revealing interview.

64 THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS

We talk to the folk behind the most unusual zombie flick.

70 WESTWORLD

You can't keep a good murderous theme park down.

74 PROP STORE

Delve into a sci-fi treasure trove.

78 THE EXORCIST

Where will the new TV series based on the film go?

82 CHRISTOPHER PRIEST

The writer looks back over his long and varied career.

86 LAURE EVE

One of the shooting stars of YA on escaping into literature.

88 SUPERMAN RETURNS

It's ten years old (oh yes), so we look back at the film that resurrected the Man of Steel.

► RED ALERT (NEWS)**11 ASH VS EVIL DEAD**

He's still scrapping...

20 ROGUE ONE

We try and keep calm as we analyse the latest *Star Wars* trailer.

► FIRST CONTACT**32 YOUR LETTERS**

This issue we've got a thousand and one opinions on *Star Trek Beyond*. And on other stuff too!

36 WISHLIST

Captain Marvel's coming and here's what you'd like to see in it.

► REVIEWS**94 BLAIR WITCH**

The secret is out! And now, *SFX*'s review is too...

98 PREACHER

It's absolutely nothing like the comic, but our man is impressed.

► VIEWSCREEN**124 OUTCAST**

Reviewing the first season of the strange supernatural drama.

► REGULARS**39 OPINION**

James Lovegrove chronicles a mammoth task involving Alan Moore's new doorstopper.

40 BOOK CLUB

Gareth L Powell on *Consider Phlebas* by Iain M Banks.

129 BLASTERMIND

Tim Burton fan? Test your knowledge chops here.

130 TOTAL RECALL

Ian Berriman totally recalls Xander Harris from *Buffy*.

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Rants & Raves

INSIDE THE SFX HIVE MIND

RICHARD EDWARDS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Really excited by the *Arrival* trailer. I hope the movie doesn't just dissolve into planetary destruction.

RANTS

→ *Civil War* and *Ghostbusters* aside, it's been a pretty ordinary year for blockbusters. *Doctor Strange*, *Fantastic Beasts* and *Rogue One*, we're pinning our hopes on you!



NICK SETCHFIELD FEATURES EDITOR

RAVES

→ Ended up rather liking *Suicide Squad* in spite of some truly heinous storytelling. An endearing, entertaining mess.

RANTS

→ We're more than halfway through *Star Trek's* golden anniversary year but it all feels so muted compared to the Bond and *Who* fiftieths.



IAN BERRIMAN REVIEWS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Quite enjoying *BrainDead*, the political satire in which alien bugs infect Congress.

→ Hoping for reprints of '70s comic *Action* now that Rebellion's bought their archive.
→ I watched every *Elm Street* movie for issue one of our new horror quarterly, *Horrorville*. Hammer Draculas next!



JOSH WINNING NEWS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Poor *Suicide Squad*. I don't understand the critical drubbing – it pulverised the dreary *Batman V Superman*.
→ Watched *Turbo Kid* (on Netflix) for a second time and it's still great. If you haven't seen it yet, go hunt it down.

RANTS

→ Really sad to see Metrodome go.



RUSSELL LEWIN PRODUCTION EDITOR

RAVES

→ *The Secret Life Of Pets* perhaps wasn't quite us and nor was it as wondrous as *Toy Story*. Pets, though – aren't they great?
→ ...which is why I'm saddened *Nine Lives* got bad reviews. Put me right off it.
→ That *Rogue One* lot could do with a bath and some freshly laundered clothes.



JONATHAN COATES ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ My three favourite *Red Dwarf* episodes: "Queeg", "Better Than Life" and "Gunmen Of The Apocalypse".
→ Incredible second trailer for *Rogue One*. Even more excited about this than *Eps VII* and *VIII*.
→ How come the SWU has U-wings and X-wings when they don't use a Roman alphabet?



CATHERINE KIRKPATRICK ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ The Comic-Con *Thor* trailer has got me excited for the next film. Hope it's just as light-hearted.
→ Pleased to hear Sam Mendes is in talks to do a live-action *James And The Giant Peach*. Was always one of my fave Roald Dahl books.
→ Joe Gilgun is definitely the stand out in *Preacher*.



WILL SALMON SPECIALS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Had a brilliant time at Horror Channel FrightFest. Highlights were the *Stranger Things*-esque *Beyond The Gates* and bizarro body horror comedy *The Master Cleanse*.
→ Finally, finally Angelo Badalamenti's *Twin Peaks* soundtrack has been reissued on vinyl and it's glorious.



LAUREN O'CALLAGHAN GR+ FILM & TV EDITOR

RAVES

→ I'm loving the news that Zendaya is playing none other than MJ in *Spider-Man: Homecoming*.

RANTS

→ *The Walking Dead* is killing me with all the season seven teasers at the moment. Eleven character trailers? I just want to know who Negan killed already!



ANDREW WESTBROOK TOTAL FILM OPERATIONS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Satisfied my *Thrones* withdrawal by heading to the spectacular Girona, in Spain, aka Braavos/King's Landing. Managed to keep my clothes on for the walk of shame.
→ Finally about to watch *Stranger Things*. Just hope the curse of the hype doesn't strike.



Where did my science fiction education begin? Obviously *Star Wars* was huge, as were the later years of old *Who*, and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. But looking back, I think *Red Dwarf* was just as important – and not just because, in the Doctor-less, pre-*X-Files* wilderness years of the early '90s it was one of the few bits of sci-fi we got on our tellies. Not only was it funny, and the sort of show you'd spend hours reliving with your schoolmates the morning after it aired, it was also extremely clever, and packed with brilliant ideas.

Now, more than two decades later, *Red Dwarf* is still a big deal, having become a major hit on Dave. After the successful return to form of *Red Dwarf X* in 2012, we had to celebrate the show coming back for not one, but two new series – so we've travelled three million years into the future to chat with the Dwarfers and co-creator Doug Naylor about their new voyages (p44).

Beyond Rimmer, Lister, Kryten and the Cat, this is one hell of a packed issue, taking in everything from the return of the *Blair Witch* (p14), to the exciting new *Star Trek* TV show (p18) and the multiverse-expanding third season of *The Flash* (p52).

For more sci-fi and fantasy action, why not subscribe to make sure you never miss an issue of *SFX* (see p42). And if you're a fan of being scared, check out our new sister magazine *Horrorville* – it's on sale now.

Rich

Richard Edwards, Editor
@RichDEdwards

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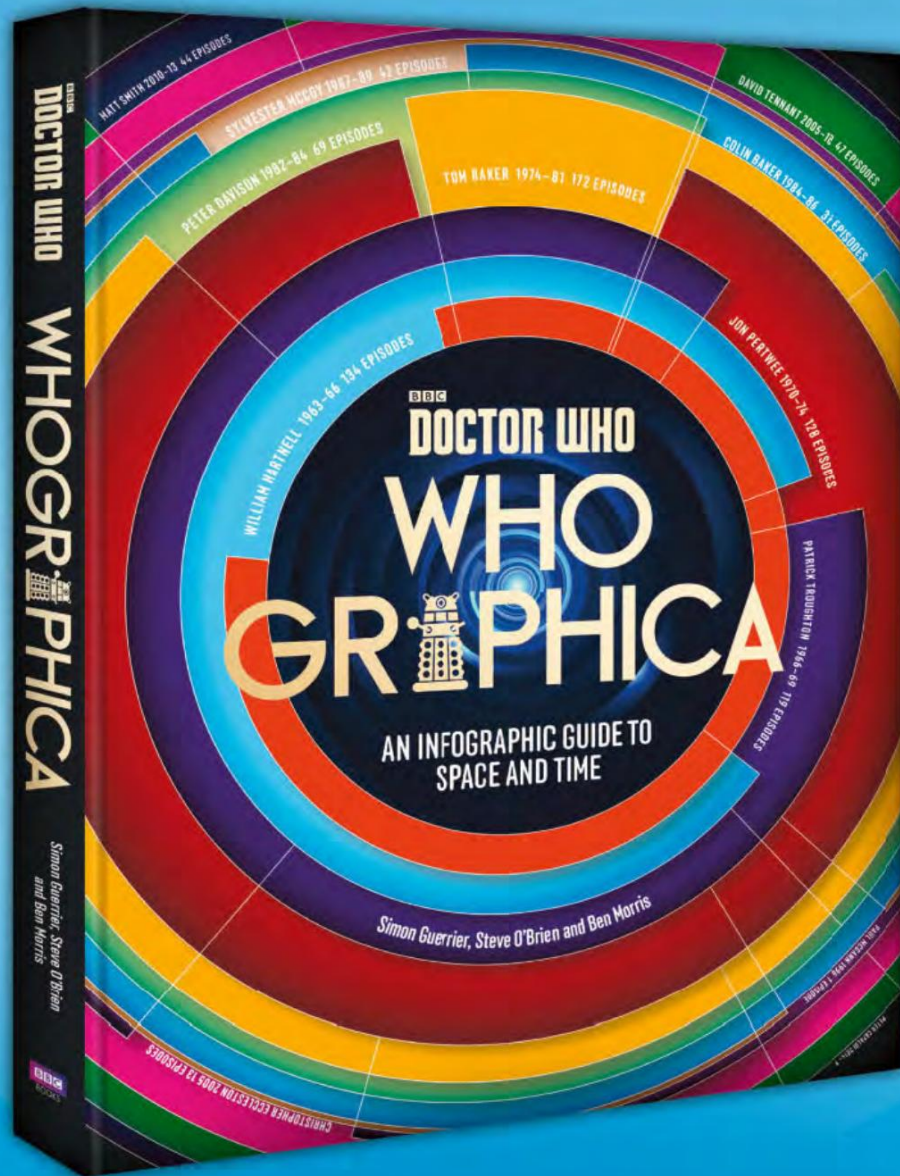
See us on page 56



RICH'S PORTRAIT BY OLLY CURTIS

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→ NEWS //// INTERVIEWS //// INSIGHT //// SONIC → *edited by Josh Winning*

CAST EXCLUSIVE!

DEAD AGAIN

Get ready to
feel groovy with
Ash Vs Evil Dead:
Round Two



→ **Things like this just don't happen.** Sure, popular franchises are sometimes revived after years of lying comatose, but the result is more often *Indiana Jones* And *The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull* than *Ash Vs Evil Dead*.

Then again, executive producers Sam Raimi, Rob Tapert and Bruce Campbell's cult horror comedy film series *The Evil Dead* was never about normality, so we shouldn't be all that surprised it returned from the grave last year in the form of a TV show that satisfied long-time fans of Campbell's clueless titular →

Highlights



14 WOOD YOU BELIEVE IT?

→ The witch is back in Adam Wingard's tree-quel *Blair Witch*.



17 DEAD WOMAN WALKING

→ Catching up with *The Walking Dead*'s Lauren Cohan, aka Maggie Greene.



18 THESE ARE THE VOYAGES

→ Engaging warp factor 9 for *Star Trek: Discovery*.

SCI-FACT! Deep Purple, Alice Cooper, Styx and AC/DC have all featured on the show's rocking soundtrack.

“It’s double the gore, double the laughs, and quadruple the blood!”

hero while also giving newcomers the kind of outrageousness that’s been missing from movie theatres for far too long.

According to Dana DeLorenzo, who plays Ash’s fellow Deadite slayer Kelly Maxwell, the show isn’t about to take its success for granted in its second season. “They set the bar so high in season one,” the actress tells *Red Alert* at this summer’s Television Critics Association press tour in Los Angeles. “But I have to say, in the first five minutes alone of episode one of season two, we clear the bar. It’s double the gore, double the laughs, and quadruple the blood.”

She continues: “They add so much richness to this season. What I like, as a fan of this show, is how they’ve expanded the world. We have Ash’s father, which means double the quotable one-liners – guys, start making the t-shirts. We have Ash’s old flame, the one that got away. And there’s so many supporting characters that we can now torture!”

The surprises don’t stop there, with DeLorenzo’s castmate Ray Santiago, aka Ash’s faithful sidekick Pablo Simon Bolivar, getting particularly gory this time around. “I rip my face off within the first episode of the second season,” he jokes. “No, we’re not going to back down. This season I’m tortured not just in the last two episodes of the season but in every episode of the season. It has become a thing, and you’ll see that in a lot of ways the characters are sort of going on their own *Evil Dead* journeys, where they’re changed in a way that Ash changed in the original movies. Particularly for Pablo – he’ll be changed in a way that we’re not ready for.”

DAD’S THE WORD

One of season two’s biggest changes comes in the form of genre legend Lee Majors, who plays Ash’s estranged father, with whom the one-armed protagonist is reunited after many years apart. “It’s just [about] adding another generation to my career,” says Majors of signing onto the series. “Having gone through about five of them, I really wanted another doll or action figure, you know? That’s why I’m here.”

Though the *Six Million Dollar Man* star is new to the horror genre, he soon learned that *Evil Dead* has limitless quantities of blood. “I got my indoctrination with the blood in a stall in the men’s bathroom, where somebody was beating me up,” Majors reveals. “I hear a



She was never going to that manicurist again.

chainsaw coming through the back and it goes into the person and the blood comes all over me... I didn’t have my eyes closed. It went up my nose, in my eyes; and of course you’re all bloody and you have to continue all day like that. And [when] it dries it feels like cardboard and it sticks to you!”

In addition to Majors, *Ash Vs Evil Dead*’s second season also introduces actress Michelle Hurd – a veteran of *Law & Order: SVU* and *Hawaii Five-O* – to the show as Ash’s old high school sweetheart. “Coming from procedural worlds of always doing cops and lawyers,” says Hurd, “I can’t tell you how excited I was walking on that set. It’s very different from a cop show. I don’t just go, ‘Yeah, so the perp had some semen on the panties.’ I mean, there’s some guy standing in front of you with a huge cannon that’s going to shoot out blood in your face and you’re like, ‘Let’s do it!’ It’s an amazing experience. It’s unlike anything else.”

As for working with Campbell, Hurd remarks, “I mean, come on. His timing is unparalleled. He’s such a strong actor. You can’t do [what he does] without being complex and having depth and having weight to your delivery; and he really does. He shares that with his cast, with his crew. He’s generous, he’s talented, he’s funny... and he’s a good kisser.” Adds DeLorenzo with a laugh: “It takes someone very intelligent to play someone as dumb as Ash.”

Before the cast leaves us, Hurd promises that season two’s second episode offers “the most hilarious yet insanely disgusting Ash fight of all time, of any fight you’ve ever seen in your entire life.” She adds: “You will be at the water cooler the next day talking about this. Like, ‘I cannot unsee that. I am horrified but also laughing. Why?’ So brace yourself for that.”

Ash Vs Evil Dead season two will air on Starz in the US from 2 October, and in the UK next year.



Back in the red.



An action figure set in the making.



ASH BACK

Bruce Campbell on stunts, man girdles and fan love...



In season one of *Ash Vs Evil Dead* you did a lot of your own stunts. Do you do fewer in season two?

→ No, no. Because dumb things happen, like the following... They go, "Ash is going to get hit by a car." Great. So normally they have a stuntman - my stuntman Raicho Vasilev, an excellent stuntman from Bulgaria. But if you're filming from inside the car and you're supposed to hit Ash, wouldn't it be better if the real Ash comes up and splats against the windshield? So I would volunteer occasionally throughout the season to do stuff like that. And after the fourth take, that's when you realise that was a stupid decision. But you got yourself into it so you got to kind of do it. We had a few of those this season.

Were you ever worried that this show wouldn't find a wide audience?

→ I was worried. Hell yeah. Because they could have easily gone, "Ah, nice try."

***Evil Dead* fans had been demanding your return for decades...**

→ Yeah, and now bring me back when I'm not really capable of doing it anymore and make me do it. Perfect, let's just see what happens... Thank god [that] in the show Ash wears a man girdle and has dentures, so we can get away with a lot. But yes, it's been very gratifying. Because fans are always very honest and very direct, because they have no reason not to be. They've been very accepting of the show and so we don't want to let them down. Because they were the ones who made enough noise for so many decades. They would not shut up about these movies, god bless them. I'd rather let a studio executive down than the fans down. Because they're operating from a business point of view, I get where they're coming from. But with fans... You got to give little Billy what he wants. And in this case it's carnage and mayhem, unbridled.

How does the show top itself in its second year?

→ With Lucy [Lawless]'s character, Ruby. Ruby is much more integrated this season, and I think it'll be easier for fans to get behind that character too.



SCI-FACT! The *Blair Witch Project* director Eduardo Sánchez and producer Gregg Hale are pursuing a *Blair Witch* prequel.

DIRECTOR EXCLUSIVE

WITCH WAY NOW?

You're Next director Adam Wingard casts a spell with *Blair Witch*...

➔ “We were never allowed to write the words ‘Blair Witch’ on anything,” says Adam Wingard, talking up his latest – a super-secret sequel to the 1999 found-footage phenomenon *The Blair Witch Project*. For three years, during prep and production, Wingard (*You're Next*, *The Guard*) was calling *Blair Witch* by its fake title, “The Woods”. “It actually feels weird to say it out loud now,” he says. “I still constantly check myself and go, ‘Oh my god, did I just give something away?’”

The secrecy is understandable. The \$25,000-budgeted original became the most successful indie of all time, grossing \$248 million, with the public intrigued by a spook story co-directors Eduardo Sánchez and Daniel Myrick purported to be true. “I was obsessed,” says Wingard, who was a teenager when he first saw it. “It was a great film in the sense you felt there were all these clues and hidden messages. It kept you coming back for more.”

Wingard's *Blair Witch* picks up with James (James Allen McCune) setting out into the Maryland woods where his sister Heather disappeared all those years earlier. So is it a sequel or a reboot? “It is both of those things,” Wingard answers. “The reason we're not calling it ‘*Blair Witch 3*’ is because we want to come with a fresh new perspective, saying: ‘We're restarting it. We're sorry about ‘Number 2’. Let's pretend like that didn't happen. We'll go back to what you liked and let's get this party started again.’”

“You're going to see things out in the woods...”



James Allen McCune plays the brother of the original film's Heather.

Ah, yes – “Number 2”. Or *Book Of Shadows: Blair Witch 2* to give it its proper title – Joe Berlinger’s misguided sequel that killed the franchise for a decade-and-a-half. “[Now] people claim not to hate it, but I have a hard time believing that,” says Wingard. “I just don’t like that movie at all. I felt like, ‘How badly can you miss the mark?’ Taking one of the most realistic horror films of all time and then dubbing all this phoney acting and crappy-looking, dated-’90s style camerawork... the whole thing looked like a Pearl Jam video. It had no authenticity to it at all!”

Working with his regular scribe Simon Barrett, the 33-year-old Wingard wanted to revive memories of the original, delving back into the Blair Witch mythology and delivering a pure-blooded found-footage movie. “I wanted to play by the same rules,” he says, calling his movie “a technological update” of the Myrick-Sánchez film. Everything from DSLR cameras to earpiece-cams (worn by the actors, helping to stabilise shaky footage) and even a mini-drone are used, as James and his friends head for one scary showdown.

While all of these tech-elements feel organic to the story, Wingard has also been careful to use the same in-camera approach to the scary bits. “I really come more from an appreciation of old-school effects,” he says. “There’s no CGI in the film. You’re definitely going to see things out in the woods that you’ve never seen before... We created everything you see on set and there are no silly CGI monsters.” Buckle up then... the Blair Witch is back. ●

Blair Witch opens on 15 September and is reviewed on page 94.

“DON’T QUOTE ME”

“I HOPE THAT GAMBIT DOESN’T TAKE 10 YEARS [TO MAKE], BUT IT TAKES A LITTLE HONING TO GET THAT TONE AND THAT VOICE EXACTLY RIGHT.”

Simon Kinberg is determined to do *Gambit* justice.



AERIAL ASSAULT

SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

→ “A lot of the show is going to be expanding the Ghost Rider canon,” says Gabriel Luna, who’ll play him in **Agents Of SHIELD**.

→ The long-awaited season three of **Star Wars: Rebels**

will air on Disney XD from 24 September.

→ Marvel comic **Runaways** is being adapted into a series for Hulu by Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage.

→ Dolph Lundgren will play baddie Kovar in season five of **Arrow**.

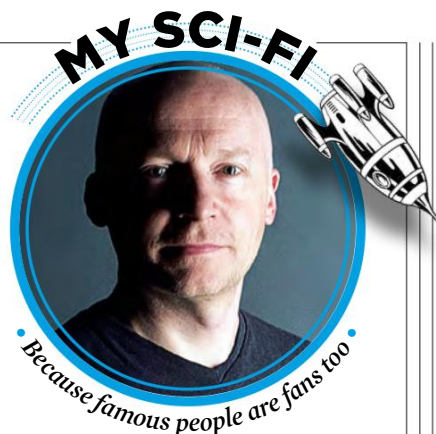
→ Lance Henriksen will play the JSA’s Obsidian in season two of **Legends Of Tomorrow**.

→ Grant Morrison and Brian Taylor are adapting **Brave New World** for Syfy.

→ Charisma Carpenter will play an ex-Playboy model in the fifth ep of **Lucifer**’s second season.

→ **Supergirl** and **The Flash** will reunite for a two-part musical crossover.

→ **Powers** has been cancelled – season three will be its last.



MARCUS DU SAUTOY

THE **MATHS PROFESSOR** AND **TV PRESENTER** SUMS UP HIS GENRE FAVES

Favourite SF/fantasy film

→ There are a few SF movies that use maths. How’s an alien culture going to communicate with humans? I think it’s mathematics which would be the common language. So one of the movies I’ve really loved is *Contact*. You have Ellie Arroway at SETI listening to white noise, then suddenly these prime numbers start coming through – that’s the beginning of the realisation that there must be an intelligent culture out there.

Favourite SF/fantasy TV

→ I was a big fan of *Thunderbirds*. And I am, along with the rest of the world, a big *Game Of Thrones* fan. There’s also *Black Mirror* – that can be really relevant to understanding the power of the technology we’re creating and where it might take us.

Favourite SF/fantasy books

→ The book I chose on *Desert Island Discs* has been very significant for me – Hermann Hesse’s *The Glass Bead Game*. It’s about a futuristic game where players try and fuse together the ideas of mathematics, philosophy, music, art, science, history... I think in a sense I’ve been trying to play the glass bead game, to find a way to connect mathematics with other disciplines.

Favourite SF/fantasy games

→ I did a bit of *Dungeons & Dragons* as a kid. I like that element of strategy, because that’s very much like being a mathematician looking many steps ahead.

Marcus du Sautoy is speaking at the London Literature Festival on 16 October (www.southbankcentre.co.uk). His book What We Cannot Know is out now from 4th Estate.



SCI-FACT! Nemesis's first appearance in 1980's *Prog* #167 took its title from The Jam's "Going Underground".

A ZARJAZ MILESTONE

2000 AD creatives Matt Smith, Kevin O'Neill and Pat Mills celebrate **Prog 2000...**

➔ **Designed not just as a trip back in time but also a taster of what's to come,** this month's landmark *Prog 2000* of the Galaxy's Greatest Comic features special one-off adventures from old favourites Judges Dredd and Anderson, and Rogue Trooper.

"I decided to have Tharg move through the periods of 2000 AD history across the six stories within the issue, ending with the start of a brand new series in Peter Milligan and Rufus's Dayglo's *Counterfeit Girl*, so that it wasn't all about the nostalgia," says current Mighty One Matt Smith, revealing that there will also be special interlude pages illustrated by the likes of Mike McMahon, Dave Gibbons and Brian Bolland. "I came up with the idea of having Tharg opening doors into the bubble universes that each story world is contained within, so he could literally walk through the action."

Prog 2000 sees Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill return to Nemesis the Warlock with the delightfully twisted *Tubular Hells*. "It's a classic 'Tube' story with lots of twists and turns," says Mills. "Kevin and I share a dislike of the establishment and in particular the Catholic Church, so this is very much in the tradition of classic Nemesis stories. After all, the premise of Nemesis has always been 'The Spanish Inquisition in space.'"

"We both have a demented sense of humour that manifests in the worse-is-better situations that we put Nemesis and Torquemada in," adds O'Neill. "Drawing them again reminded me of the power of a strong pair of characters, plus my heart always lifts when I draw the Blitzspear." ●

2000 AD Prog #2000 is published by Rebellion on 28 September.



PEAK PERFORMANCE

Ray Wise talks small-screen surrealism in the new **Twin Peaks**...

➔ **It's been 25 years since Dale Cooper** poured his last cup of coffee in writer-director David Lynch's *Fire Walk With Me*, the film spin-off of his television landmark *Twin Peaks*. But next summer will, at long last, bring 18 new episodes of the show – and even long-dead characters are coming back for another slice of pie...

"One thing you have to understand about David Lynch," says Ray Wise – whose Leland Palmer, though killed in the original series, is a regular in the new one – "is that there's never a conclusion to anything. As far as he's concerned, everything he's done is still an open book. Over the last 25 years he would say to me, 'You know, Ray, *Twin Peaks* is still there. It's still there and the people are living their lives. And maybe we'll come back and revisit them some day.'"

"I said," adds the actor, "'That's great, David. But, you know, I'm dead!' 'I know that Ray. But there are ways to work around that.'"

Despite the fact that "weird TV" is more popular than ever, Wise adds that the show will be accessible to veteran fans and newcomers alike...

"I don't think David ever tries to find a balance. I think he does things the way he envisions them when he wants to do them. But I think he expects that everyone will want to take a look at it." ●

Twin Peaks will return next year.

GETTY

SCI-FACT! Cohan has appeared in *Chuck*, *The Vampire Diaries* and *Supernatural*.



FIVE MINUTES WITH...

LAUREN COHAN

The Walking Dead's Maggie on cliffhangers and keeping secrets

SECRETS AND LIES

“I find it exciting that I literally cannot say anything about the new season. Some years we can sort of allude to what may or may not happen, but at this point we really have to say absolutely nothing, which is liberating for us in a way.”

BEGIN THE NEGAN

“We knew about the season six cliffhanger I guess a few episodes before, though we already knew that with Negan on the scene there was going to be a really bitter result – even if we didn’t know exactly what point in the timeline the bat would fall.”

BLUE-SKY THINKING

“I like playing Maggie because she always seems to have this feeling that everything’s going to be okay, and sometimes they are pretty not okay, but there’s this drive to keep going. She’s her father Hershel’s daughter, and I’m very lucky to play a character who follows in footsteps that I respect and that she respected so much.”

TALES FROM THE SCRIPT

“We’re told before we read a script if someone’s going to be lost in the episode, so we’re not reading it on tenterhooks about one of our friends going. When I know there’s a bad one coming I put off reading it, and then it’s, ‘Okay, I have to learn my lines at some point!’”

GORE GANG

“I think that my favourite bits of the show are definitely when the group is all together. When we’re not in the big group sometimes the craving we have is the same as the craving the audience has, and then it’s so exciting to see the gang all coming back together.”

The Walking Dead season seven comes to Fox on 24 October. Season six is out on Blu-ray & DVD from 26 September.



SCI-FACT! The Discovery's design echoes Ralph McQuarrie's designs for the abandoned '70s *Star Trek* TV series' *Enterprise*.

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

STAR TREK: DISCOVERY

Executive producer **Bryan Fuller** tells Red Alert about captaining a new kind of *Star Trek* TV show

ITS ORIGINS ARE FAMILIAR

1 Bryan Fuller reveals he was initially inspired by a piece of franchise lore. "There had been an incident, an event in *Star Trek* history and the history of Starfleet that had been talked about but never fully explored," he says. "We're going to be telling a much more serialised story... To dig deep into something, that's always very tantalising. And to tell that story through a character who is on a journey that is going to teach her how to get along with others in the galaxy. Because for her to truly understand something that is alien she has to first understand herself."

THE CAPTAIN ISN'T THE FOCUS

2 "We haven't cast her yet," says Fuller of his show's lead, who will be a woman but won't be the titular ship's captain. "We've seen six series now from captains' points of view; and to see a character from a different perspective... who has a different dynamic with the captain and with subordinates, felt like it was gonna give us a richer context."

IT'S A PRIME MOVER

3 JJ Abrams' *Trek* movies created a new timeline, but that shouldn't impact *Discovery* too much. "The correct designations,

according to the internet now, are the Kelvin Universe, which is the JJ Abrams universe, and the Prime Universe," Fuller explains. "We're gonna be set in the Prime Universe. We're about 10 years before Kirk's five-year mission. So that gives us an opportunity to bridge the gap between *Enterprise* and the original series."

THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF ALIENS

4 "We'll probably have a few more aliens than we normally do in a *Star Trek* cast," Fuller says. "Normally you have one person with a bumpy forehead and then seven other people who look relatively human. We wanted

to paint a picture of Starfleet that is indicative of a universe where we're encountering people who are much different than we are. So we're going to have new exciting aliens but also reimaginings of existing aliens..."

IT'LL BE DIVERSE

5 Just this year, *Star Trek Beyond* made franchise history by revealing that Sulu is gay, and it looks like *Discovery* will continue to embrace the franchise's love of diversity. "Absolutely we're having a gay character," says Fuller. "Going into this process as a gay man who worked on *Voyager*... I still have a folder with the hate mail *Voyager* got because there was a rumour that Jeri Ryan's character was going to be gay. The bile in that letter... I kept it because if I ever got the chance to do another *Star Trek* show it was going to have a gay character." We're sure Sulu and the rest of the *Enterprise* would approve. ●

Star Trek: Discovery will air on Netflix in the UK in the new year.



Bryan Fuller finds his inner Vulcan.



AERIAL ASSAULT

SCI-FI TV
ROUND UP

→ Foggy Nelson (Elden Henson) and Malcolm Ducasse (Eka Darville) will both appear in Netflix's **Defenders** alongside their pals Daredevil and Jessica Jones.

→ David Suchet has been cast as the Landlord in **Doctor Who**.

→ Sharon Leal has signed on to play Miss Martian in **Supergirl**.

→ Savitar will be the main villain in the next season of **The Flash**.

→ Season four of **Agents Of SHIELD** will deal with the aftermath of the events of *Captain America: Civil War*.

→ Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg sci-fi comedy series **Singularity** has been given a pilot order by FX.

→ NBC confirm that **Grimm's** upcoming sixth season (due in January) will be its last.

→ **The Living And The Dead** won't be back for a second series, says the BBC.

→ **Gotham** season three will show "how the villains became the supervillains of the comics".



EDITOR EXCLUSIVE

STARSHIPS ASSEMBLE!

Star Trek: Waypoint boldly goes where no *Star Trek* comic has been before...



Named after "a stopping place on a long journey", IDW's new anthology *Star Trek: Waypoint* will focus on numerous incarnations of the Starfleet crew who aren't a regular part of their *Trek* comic-book line.

"Fans are constantly asking for an ongoing *Next Generation*, *Enterprise*, or even *Animated Series* comic, and how I wish I could make all of them happy, so this book is a start," IDW Group Editor Sarah Gaydos tells Red Alert. "It's a way for *Trek* stories other than the current Kelvin timeline to get out into the marketplace, and each issue will feature stories from various *Trek* iterations, and each iteration will definitely be covered."

Taking a leaf out of Larry Nemecek's *Star Trek Cartography* book, *Waypoint* was inspired by the eclectic variety of the *Star Trek* canon. "The maps in that book are so gorgeous, and in looking at them, you're reminded of stories throughout the *Trek* universe," says Gaydos.

With the 40-page first issue featuring stories of both the *Original Series* and the *Next Generation*, *Waypoint* is an opportunity to contrast the different *Treks*. "What really stands out is what they all have in common, which is coming together to work as a team, as well as using science to solve problems both big and small," says Gaydos, who also wants to give a wider range of creators a chance to explore the *Star Trek* universe.

"I'm reaching out to folk who, because of time limitations or perhaps lack of exposure to the wider *Trek* fandom, might not be usually available," she says. "In the first issue, Donny Cates and Mack Chater do a *Next Generation* story. They come from more of an indie background, but their love of *Trek* goes deep. Similarly, Sandra Lanz – who has done some amazing work on Image's *Island* anthology – does a gorgeous, poignant *The Original Series* story."

Gaydos promises that the six-issue miniseries will even venture into *Star Trek's* somewhat surreal comic book heritage. "The second issue will feature a Gold Key-style homage from bestselling *Trek* authors Dayton Ward and Kevin Dillmore, with art by veteran *Trek* artist Gordon Purcell," reveals Gaydos. "It's just way too much fun, and really leans into the whole vintage, wacky feel of the very earliest *Trek* comics." ●

Star Trek: Waypoint is released by IDW later this month.

“DON'T QUOTE ME”

“HER ORIGIN STORY IS SIMILAR TO GREEN LANTERN, AND OBVIOUSLY THAT'S NOT WHAT WE WANT TO DO. THERE'S A LOT OF REINVENTION THAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN.”

Writer Nicole Perlman is giving Captain Marvel a refresh.



Red Alert Nov 2016

Freeze Frame

Top trailers dissected

SCI-FACT! Disney reportedly ordered reshoots to lighten the tone, with Tony "Bourne" Gilroy helping out director Gareth Edwards.

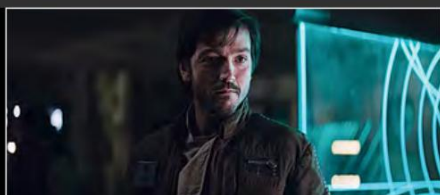
ROGUE ONE

OUT
16 DEC
2016

This time it's war as a new breed of *Star Wars* prequel gets gritty...



↑ This is Jedha, a Jedi holy land - yet another desert planet in *Star Wars*. Given the Empire's feelings about the Jedi, expect it to be a target.



↑ This trailer suggests that Diego Luna's Captain Cassian Andor assembles the group of Rebel fighters, a fact that's been hinted previously.



↑ This is the new U-Wing, which appears to be taking off from Yavin IV. This could well be the Rebels' main mode of transportation.



↑ "They destroyed our home!" We're assuming that home is on Jedha, though whether the Death Star is involved remains to be seen...



↑ This is the first time we've heard Alan Tudyk's K-2SO talk. His assessment of chances of success at the end of the trailer is very C-3PO.



↑ Question: why is the Death Star upside down? Is it just a nice camera angle? (After all, there's no upside down in space.)



↑ This wonderful eclipse shot suggests Jedha could have been targeted by the Empire as the location for a certain weapons test...



↑ That Stormtrooper tank is much more Earth-like artillery than we're used to in *Star Wars* - no legs, doesn't look like it's levitating...



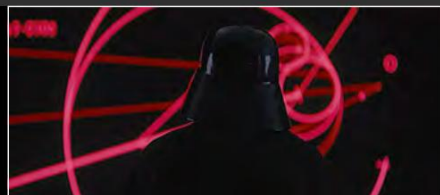
↑ Someone fires a missile at an AT-AT - if projectiles have so much effect on them, why didn't someone use them in the Battle of Hoth?



↑ There's a smile from Saw Gerrera here. Does he see Jyn as a disciple? It's also been revealed that the suit is keeping him alive, Vader-style.



↑ Is this Jyn going to full-on confront Darth Vader? IS IT? She looks like she means serious business as she faces off against a TIE Fighter.



↑ Obligatory Vader shot! We love how the wall graphics are so faithful to the original movie. And we're very, very excited.

The Buzz



RICH So faithful to the original, yet with a very different tone - I love how it gives an idea of what the less flashy members of the Rebellion were up to while Han and Luke were rescuing Leia.



JAYNE BRILLIANT. This may even be better than *The Force Awakens*. I'm freaking out. OMG. Did you want me to say something more coherent? In that case there's a 97.6% chance of failure.



JOSH We have no idea what happens to these characters, which makes it super exciting. Also, how gorgeous are the visuals? This is definitely darker and more war-y than any *Wars* before...



RUSSELL Despite all the dazzling, amazing stuff in this trailer it's mostly about the last two seconds for me. A true shiver down the spine. Darth Vader better be in this lots!

SCI-FACT!

Garth Nix majored in screenwriting at university and still works on screenplays.



AKA began as a film script before finding life as a comic.

WRITER EXCLUSIVE

DEATH BECOMES HIM

Tony Lee introduces **AKA**, the next big thing in comics...

➔ “Pretty much every page hits you in the face,” says writer Tony Lee of his new comic, *Also Known As*, which launched at this year’s Comic-Con and hits shelves in the UK this month. “You have revenge, justice, intimidation, an enforcer with a serious amount of anger and psychosis...”

Starting out life as a film script, *AKA* sees one-time cavalry captain Lucas Wilson recruited by the “Reapers” after his untimely death, spending over a century collecting souls for his boss, Charon the Ferryman – aka Death. Doubting his calling, he investigates the Reapers and their sworn enemies the Rogues, getting caught up in an age-old war between his boss and Cerberus, a fallen angel. Plus an old enemy from his days as a captain...

Originally conceived as “a supernatural story with angels and demons”, *AKA* changed dramatically when Lee decided to fuse a supernatural tale with contemporary tech (Philip K Dick and *The Adjustment Bureau* were inspirations).

“If you walked into a Viking camp with a machine gun, you’d be venerated as a god,” he says. “What if people with incredible tech existed millennia ago, and we created stories about them that created things like angels?” With BoxFly committed to bringing the story to screens, Lee’s graphic novel is just the start of what could be the next big thing in comic-book movies... ●

AKA is out now.

Nix now meets authors who were inspired to write after reading his books as children.



AUTHOR EXCLUSIVE

GOLDFINGERS

Garth Nix returns to the Old Kingdom with *Goldenhand*



➔ “Because I’ve been doing this a long time now, whole families come out to see me,” author Garth Nix says, talking to Red Alert from his home in Australia.

“Sometimes I’ve even had three generations of one family – grandparents, parents and kids.”

Nix’s young adult books have been topping bestseller lists for more than two decades now, and with *Goldenhand* he has returned to his hugely popular series set in the Old Kingdom.

“It picks up after the events of *Lirael* and *Abhorsen*,” he explains. “Lirael is the newly minted Abhorsen-in-waiting, so she’s become one of the people who makes sure that dead things stay dead. Like all my books, it’s an adventure story, but it’s also about life and death and love. And it connects back with some of the other characters in previous books – in fact almost any character you can mention you will see again, one way or another!”

Goldenhand seems to end the saga that began with *Sabriel* in 1995, but Nix isn’t ruling out further travels with this cast. “It’s a very big world, and there’s lots of gaps and corners where I can tell stories,” he muses.

Despite spending so much time in this world, Nix has also written other series – *The Keys To The Kingdom* and *The Seventh Tower*, to name but two – and has more on the way. “After *Goldenhand*, my next book is done, out in April. It’s called *Frogkisser*! and it’s a children’s novel about a princess who has to go on a quest. I’m also working on a big fat fantasy, and a science fiction novel.” He laughs. “I’m working on too many things at the moment – I think sometimes I need to stop being a short-order cook, as I’ve got seven saucepans all going at once...” ●

Goldenhand is out on 4 October from Hot Key Books. Nix will tour the UK the same month.

SCI-FACT! Aquaman's villain is expected to be Black Manta, the character's arch-enemy, who debuted in September 1967's *Aquaman* #35.

DIRECTOR EXCLUSIVE

UNDER THE SEA

Director James Wan plunges the ocean depths for his *Aquaman* adaptation...

→ With films like *The Conjuring*, *Insidious* and the original *Saw* to his credit, James Wan has become synonymous with 21st-century horror. And he's gone on record as saying he'll bring his affinity for monsters and scares to his superhero debut, 2018's *Aquaman*. But when we catch up with the director at this year's Television Critics Association summer press tour in LA (where he promoted his *MacGyver* reboot), he assures us that any such frights won't overwhelm the film's sense of fun.

"Here's the thing that people are getting confused," he tells Red Alert. "Just because you have scary stories or monsters, that doesn't mean it's tonally dark. Look at Guillermo del Toro – he makes monsters all the time, but his stuff is fun and cool. Tim Burton does it as well. So it's how you go about doing it. I always say, 'Look at my movies.' I've made a lot of scary movies, but they're fun scary movies. So take that from my past work and extract from it the direction [you] think I may go with *Aquaman*."

Wan says he first encountered DC's Arthur Curry – who, as played by Jason Momoa, will appear in next year's *Justice League* before getting his solo-film spotlight – as a small child growing up in Australia.

"Obviously I'm familiar with this character from a very young age. Probably from the cartoon, the really old-school cartoon," Wan says. "Then of course the comic books. I'm a fan of the comic-book world as well. I have to say it really is [comic writer] Geoff Johns' version that got me excited about what *Aquaman* could potentially be."

Regarding the current status of the sea king's maiden big-screen voyage, Wan explains, "Obviously I'm in development right now. And I'm very superstitious. I don't care whether or not I have a green light or not. I don't believe that I'm doing it until I'm actually on set making it. There is a timetable of some sort. But I've made it pretty clear that if I were to get involved in this, I'd need the correct amount of time to do this right. That's all I'll say."

While Warner Bros's DCU movies have received criticism for being too grim, when asked if the megafanchise's mixed reception weighs in his head, Wan replies, "I just try to focus on mine." He adds, "I focus on the positive. I focus on what I think I can create – the best character, the best story, and the best movie. I try not to look at the climate. I try to understand what's happening around me, but at the end of the day I have to be the one to make those creative moves. And I try not to take things for granted." ●

Aquaman opens in cinemas in 2018.



SCI-FACT! The *Goonies* pack will come with a Sloth figure, and tell a parallel story to the movie from his viewpoint.

NEW AUTHOR

NIK ABNETT

IN *SAVANT*, EARTH IS KEPT SAFE BY AN INVISIBILITY SHIELD POWERED BY "ACTIVES"



What's the world of *Savant* like?

→ It's isn't very different from our own. I wanted a future Earth, but with a feel of some of the wonderful SF of the '50s, '60s and '70s.

Tell us a little about your protagonist.

→ Tobe is an innocent in many ways, part of a system that he doesn't understand, and in which he's being exploited for his extraordinary talents. He essentially lives the life of a child. I did some research into savantism and autism to build the character.

Did anything specific inspire the book?

→ I began by wanting to write about unconditional love. My children were fast growing into adulthood, and I wanted to explore the love of a parent for a child. This theme grew and expanded to encompass society as a whole and the preservation of the rights of the individual.

How long did the novel take to write?

→ Once I'm invested in a theme and characterisation begins to feel comfortable I write very fast, in a concentrated fashion. It took about six weeks, during which time nothing else got done, including housework!

Is *Savant* a one-off?

→ I have plans for a second novel – an accompaniment, set in this universe, but not on this world. I'd really love to write about what's happening on the other side of Earth's shield – on the Outside.

Savant is published by Solaris on 4 October.



GAME EXCLUSIVE

Hope it's not a midnight screening...

BLOCK HEADS

There are even more characters to play with in the next evolution of *Lego Dimensions*

→ If you thought *The Lego Movie* pulled together a mind-boggling array of franchises, it ain't got nothing on its videogame cousin *Lego Dimensions*. Having already brought *Doctor Who*, *Back To The Future*, *The Lord Of The Rings*, DC Comics and many more into the mix, year two will complicate things still further – in a good way. As well as servicing contemporary franchises like the *Ghostbusters* reboot and the upcoming *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them* (you'll have to wait until the film's out in November to get your hands on the latter), there's a real retro vibe to many of the other newbies, as *Sonic The Hedgehog*, *Beetlejuice*, *ET*, *Gremlins*, *Knight Rider* and *The Goonies* get remodelled in plastic bricks.

"Year two is about effectively taking what we initially made with *Lego Dimensions*, the IP mash-up that had no rules and no boundaries, but taking it a lot bigger," says game director Arthur Parsons. "When it comes

to *Dimensions*, you've got to put stuff in for everyone, things that are going to appeal to kids, to older gamers, to non-gamers, a bit of everything. It's a diverse mix, but that's *Lego Dimensions* – we've already done it with *Doctor Who*, *The Simpsons*... It works."

Aside from the new characters, the big development this year is the introduction of Battle Arenas, which will allow up to four players to scrap it out in franchise-themed environments. "It means that any of your toys, whether it's your characters or your tag items can go into the battle arena and play one against three AI, or you can play two v two, one v three or everyone against each other," explains Parsons. "Every pack in year two has a unique Battle Arena, because we wanted to enhance our digital content, not just in terms of having toys coming to life in the game." ●



Lego Dimensions: season two rolls out on PS4, Wii U, PS3 and Xbox 360 from 27 September, with further releases scheduled over upcoming months.

WONDROUS HG WELLS

Celebrate the father of science fiction at **Wells in Woking**, located in the town that inspired him

➔ It's been almost a century and a half since HG Wells came into the world. Though he was born in Kent, our very own "father of science fiction" relocated to Woking in May 1895, a place that inspired many of his defining literary works, including *The War Of The Worlds* (he unleashed a Martian invasion in Horsell Common), *The Invisible Man*, *The Island Of Dr Moreau* and *The Wheels Of Chance*.

Though he lived in the town for just 18 months (health problems returned him to Kent, and he eventually passed away in London in August 1946 aged 76), Woking provides the perfect setting for this celebration of the author's 150th anniversary. A month-long event, Wells In Woking features live performances, art installations, panel discussions and much more, all taking place across the town.

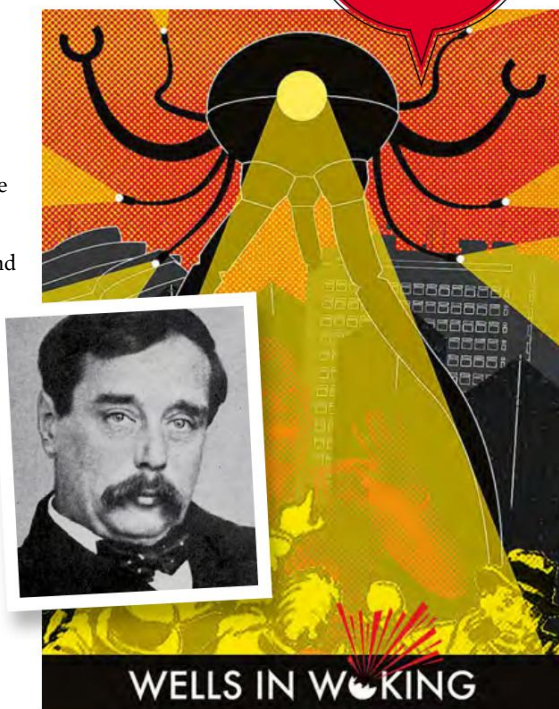
Among the events are a talk by Dr Keith Williams, who will examine *The Time Machine's* predictions of the future, plus take a look at how the story was adapted for the screen. He will also delve into how Wells's vision of alien invasion is narrated through a prophetically "camera-eyed" style in *War Of The Worlds*, while Professor Peter Beck recalls Wells's stay in Woking, focusing on what the author did for the town – and how he changed perceptions in the wider world.

Meanwhile, over at the Surrey History Centre, exhibit Woking In Wells' Time transports visitors back in time to the year Wells moved to the borough. We're sure the author would be more than proud. ●

Wells In Woking takes place in Woking until 1 October. For more information, visit www.celebratewoking.info/wellsinwoking.

DATE
Running until
1 October

LOCATION
Woking



DATE
1 October

LOCATION
BFI Southbank,
London

STAR DATE

Nichelle Nichols heads up the BFI's **Star Trek At 50** celebration



➔ It's a momentous year for the *Star Trek* franchise as it reaches its 50th birthday – yep, Gene Roddenberry's Original Series first aired in the US in September 1966, birthing a cultdom that continues to flourish half a decade later.

To celebrate the franchise's 50th anniversary, *Star Trek's* original Lieutenant Uhura, Nichelle Nichols, will take to the stage at the BFI Southbank to talk about her memories of the show. As one of the first black characters to feature on a US TV series, Nichols was a pioneer for black representation (Martin Luther King once applauded her work on the show).

Samira Ahmed will host the event, with other special guests to be announced in the run-up to the day. Expect a nostalgia-packed look back over the franchise, plus, we're sure, a little peek at where it's headed in the future – especially with *Star Trek: Discovery* on the horizon. ●

For more on Star Trek At 50, visit www.bfi.org.uk/whatson

COMING UP

GOLLANCZ FESTIVAL 2016

17-18 September

The literary love-in returns to London with appearances from Scott Lynch, Joe Abercrombie, Justina Robson, Stephen Baxter, Pat Cadigan, Alastair Reynolds and more. <http://www.gollanczfest.co.uk>

FANTASYCON

23-25 September

Frances Hardinge, Adam Nevill, Elizabeth Bear and Scott Lynch all head to Scarborough to talk sci-fi and fantasy literature. Expect nerdy talks and readings galore. Wonderful. <http://fantasyconbythesea.com>

STOKE CON TRENT

2 October

Celebrating its fifth anniversary, the brilliantly named Stoke Con Trent welcomes the likes of Patricia Quinn, Shane Rimmer, Katy Manning and *The Mighty Boosh's* Mike Fielding. www.stokecontrent.co.uk

YA SHOT

22 October

An author-run fundraising event taking place in Uxbridge, London, with 70 writers on hand to talk books, run workshops and generally celebrate YA lit. <https://yashot.wordpress.com>

LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

5-16 October

Sci-fi and fantasy film titles this year include *Phantasm: Remastered*, *Britflick The Ghoul* and Alice Lowe's directorial debut *Prevenge*. www.bfi.org.uk/fff

SCI-FACT! Babak Anvari was partly inspired by Guillermo del Toro's horror films, particularly *Pan's Labyrinth*.



NEWS WARP HIGH-SPEED FACTS

→ *Willy Wonka* and *Young Frankenstein* star **Gene Wilder** passes away at 83.
→ Henry Cavill teases that Superman may wear a black super-suit in **Justice League**.
→ **Adrian Tchaikovsky** wins 2016's Arthur C Clarke Award for best SF novel of the year with *Children Of Time*.



→ Natalie Portman says she's "done" with Marvel and won't appear in **Thor: Ragnarok**.
→ Shooting begins on Guillermo del Toro's Cold War fantasy drama **The Shape Of Water**.
→ New **Pokémon** film to be scripted by *Guardians Of The Galaxy*'s Nicole Perlman, and *Gravity Falls*' Alex Hirsch.
→ **Fantastic Four** writer Jeremy Slater says his original script ended with a "Saving Private Ryan-style" clash against Doombots in Latveria.
→ Sadly, UK distributor **Metrodome** has gone into administration. Many of its titles have been bought by 101 Films.



DIRECTOR EXCLUSIVE

Narges Rashidi gives a great performance as a woman under attack.

TEHRAN ALL NIGHT

J-horror meets war drama in smart supernatural shocker **Under The Shadow...**

➔ "You just know that when the siren goes off you have to run down to the basement, otherwise something terrible could happen," says director Babak Anvari, describing the nightmare scenario he acted out repeatedly as a child of the 1980s Iran-Iraq war. "It was a dark time, it made sense to tell a horror story set there!" He laughs. "I'm surprised nobody had done that before..."

Infusing his real-life experiences with the queasy dream logic of slow-burn horror, Anvari's feature debut, Sundance hit *Under The Shadow*, is all about terrors both real and imagined as Shideh (Narges Rashidi) battles phantoms in her high-rise Tehran home. "She's a smart woman who doesn't believe in supernatural things," says Rashidi, who was also born in Iran and experienced the war first-hand. "For me, what was so special is that I never knew; is this really happening or is it just in her head?"

As Shideh's young daughter reports seeing somebody around their battle-scarred apartment, Shideh's forced to consider the possibility that, as her neighbour warns, they

could be the target of a djinn. "Japanese horror was a major influence," reveals Anvari, who shot for just 21 days in an apartment block in Jordan, and cites *Ringu* and *The Grudge* as tonal touchstones. "It's interesting how the Japanese use their own culture and mythology to tell these really engaging stories. I thought, 'I can do the same with the culture I'm from.'"

Boasting an authentic sense of time and place, *Under The Shadow* also used Iranian culture to inform Rashidi's performance. As part of her prep for the role, the actress was told to watch *Rosemary's Baby*, and Anvari also sent her the kind of Persian music, lyrics and poems – all heavily political – that Shideh would enjoy. And while the film has a meaty subtext, it's also a nail-biter of a horror film with feminist overtones. "I didn't set out to write a feminist script," says Anvari, "it happened naturally because inspiration came from conversations I'd had with my mum."

It wasn't all scares, though, especially when it came to creating the film's terrifying djinn. "Our producer was in a green motion-capture suit jumping around on set," Rashidi laughs. "That was actually funny, I had to laugh. That was more funny than scary!" ●

Under The Shadow is out 30 September and reviewed on page 96.



“DON'T QUOTE ME”

“I WANTED TO GIVE [THE AUDIENCE] EARTH-BREAKING GRANITE MONSTERS. INSTEAD, I HAD A FEW PEBBLES IN MY HAND THAT I THREW AT THE CAMERA.”



William Shatner apologises for the ending of *Star Trek V*.

Red Alert *Image Bank* Nov 2016 *The page where pictures take control*

SCI-FACT! Andrés Muschietti's last film was 2013 horror *Mama*, about a family who encounter the supernatural.

↓ I SPY

No, Chris Pratt and Jennifer Lawrence aren't contestants on the new series of *Great British Bake Off* – this is actually the first shot from their new sci-fi film, *Passengers*. Director Morten Tyldum's flick (out in December) is set aboard a spaceship where Lawrence and Pratt wake up early during a 120-year trip to a new home. Seems like the perfect excuse to break open the Betty Crocker cake mix...

🔍 STRANGER THING

His best bud went missing in *Stranger Things*, but now it's the turn of Finn Wolfhard to pull a disappearing act, this time for Andrés Muschietti's adaptation of Stephen King's *It*. This is our first look at Wolfhard as Richie, one member of the film's Loser Club (below). Meanwhile, we've also had a glimpse at Bill Skarsgård as Pennywise the Clown (left)... Yep, we're freaked out.



AY AY, CAP'N 🦸

Don't you just love researching a role? Brie Larson's got the right idea when it comes to tackling her starring gig as Captain Marvel, here taking a time out in her super-suit while reading David Lopez and Kelly Sue DeConnick's 2014 reboot, which sees Carol Danvers land in the middle of a war between the Galactic Alliance. We can't wait to see Larson suiting up for real.



SCI-FACT!

Mericle says the Flashpoint storyline from *The Flash's* S2 finale "opens up a lot of storytelling possibilities" for *Arrow*.



Working in a metal can in the desert – a true *Star Wars* legend.

RIP 1934-2016

KENNY BAKER

Bidding farewell to the *Star Wars* actor and legend...

➔ **His most famous character was** resurrected just last year in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, so it was with sadness that we learned that R2-D2 actor Kenny Baker passed away at the age of 81. The Birmingham-born actor became a convention darling after appearing in a series of sci-fi and fantasy classics throughout the '80s, including *Willow*, *Labyrinth*, *Flash Gordon* and *Time Bandits*.

But he was best-known for enduring hours in a tin can – and in the Tunisian desert, no less – to play a droid in the *Star Wars* films. His three-foot-eight-inch stature meant he was the perfect size to play R2-D2 in a pre-CGI age; he was cast on sight by director George Lucas. "It's all about giving R2 a personality," Baker said in 2005, "and CGI can never really do that." He reprised the role for the three *Star Wars* prequels and worked as a consultant on *The Force Awakens*. Many of his co-stars tweeted heartfelt goodbyes to a man who was a friend as well as a colleague. "He WAS the droid I was looking for!" Mark Hamill said, perhaps most touchingly.

Baker passed away just 11 days before his 82nd birthday on 13 August, after an extended illness. Thanks to his fantasy work, though, he'll never be forgotten. Guillermo del Toro summed it up best when he said: "Like Napoleon, his stature was measured not from head-to-ground but head-to-sky." ●



Season five may see the last of *Arrow's* pivotal flashbacks.

PRODUCER INTERVIEW

SHARP SHOOTER

Executive producer Wendy Mericle spies big changes ahead for *Arrow* season five...

➔ **Things are getting pretty** complicated for Oliver Queen over in the DCTVU. With *Legends Of Tomorrow*, *The Flash* and *Supergirl* all returning, *Arrow* is now part of a quartet of shows all wrestling for space in the same universe. "We have an art room and a giant board for where the *Arrow* stories are going and it becomes a process of checking in [with the other shows]," explains executive producer Wendy Mericle. "When Felicity [Emily Bett Rickards] goes over to *Flash*, we kind of have to know! It has a direct impact on her availability, but also what is she learning about *Flash* that she's going to carry with her into our stories?"

With season five of *Arrow* opening with Oliver (Stephen Amell) attempting to adjust to being mayor of Star City, the show will also see a return to its darker roots – think less of season four's magic, more of season one's

flashback-heavy grit. "The goal this year is to go back and make it a much more gritty show," Mericle explains. "It's been a lot of fun."

Key to that darkness could be John Barrowman, whose Malcolm Merlyn originated on *Arrow* but has appeared in both *The Flash* and *Legends Of Tomorrow*, and has now signed on as a regular across all three shows. Meanwhile, season six is looming on the horizon, something Mericle admits is intimidating since *Arrow* was always planned as "a five-season show". "It's gonna be such a big rethink of the show; it's exciting on one level, but it'll be a big challenge," she says. "It was always this idea that we have enough flashback stories for five years, so now that we're going over – assuming we get a season six... That's when I'll be faced with that challenge, in a year!" ●

Arrow season five will air on Sky1 next month.



Nick Setchfield's

DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future



TAIL OF THE UNEXPECTED!

SPLASH

Definitive feelgood fish-out-of-water tale *Splash* is the latest slice of '80s pop culture locked in a fast car on the freeway to Remakeville. And, just like this summer's *Ghostbusters* redo, it's set for a gender-flip. While the 1984 original gave us Tom Hanks as the guy in love with Daryl Hannah's mermaid, the new version shakes

up the chromosomes – now **Channing Tatum** is the amphibious object of desire, a merman attempting to pass for human whose secret is discovered by Tatum's *22 Jump Street* co-star **Jillian Bell**. It was Bell who came up with the concept – possibly in a late night bar, after a fourth Sambuca – and she's hired **Marja-Lewis Ryan**, screenwriter of *Liked* and *Unsupervised*, to flesh

it out into a script. **Ron Howard** directed the Hanks/Hannah version and he's partnering with **Brian Grazer** – another veteran of the original – to produce this one.

NOW SEA HEAR!

AQUAMAN

So just which maritime menace will **Jason Momoa** battle in James Wan's *Aquaman*? Doctor

Plankton, perhaps? The Sinister Shrimp? Or could it be the mighty Atomic Tuna, Devil-Lord of the Deep? The smart money's on Black Manta, Aquaman's number one nemesis in the comics, a supervillain with a hi-tech underwater suit that allows him to go fist to fist with the King of Atlantis. *The Wire*'s **Michael K Williams** is lobbying for the role but Wan won't

confirm the character's presence in the movie. He's too busy working out the physics of undersea dialogue: "I love the idea of underwater speaking but with a real sort of sonic, aquatic quality to it," he tells IGN. "So there's this sort of aquatic, almost sonar/whale thing. Even though it's in a human language, there's this slight sort of underlay to it, this ping to it, which I think would be interesting for us to design from a sound design perspective." Alternatively, endless close-ups of goldfish-style puckering await us. *Aquaman* breaks the waves on 27 July 2018.

INFINITY WARRIORS!

THE AVENGERS 3 & 4

Is the Marvel Cinematic Universe accelerating toward an endpoint? Or is it heading for a brand new big bang? We fed this question into a particle accelerator and it spat out a quote from co-director **Anthony Russo**, talking about the next two Avengers films. "I can't get into too much detail about who we're introducing, but these two movies are intended to be the culmination of everything that has happened in the MCU since the very first Iron Man movie. In being a culmination, these movies are in some ways going to be an end to certain things, and in some ways they're going to be the beginning of certain things." As we scrutinise this intriguing new data let's also study a transmission from our deep space probe located in **Vin Diesel's** head: "The Guardians will be included in *Avengers: Infinity War*," confirms the voice of Groot, "and that's incredibly exciting. Incredibly exciting." Star-Lord and co cross paths with Cap, Iron Man and the gang on 4 May 2018.

NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE!

FLATLINERS

What lies beyond this vale of tears? What awaits us in the eternal emptiness when flesh falls away and the world as we know it recedes, replaced by the infinite void? No, we're not talking *Jackpot247* on ITV in the early hours. We mean the afterlife, the



→ **Daisy Ridley** starring in **Patrick Ness** YA adap *Chaos Walking* for Lionsgate... **Jared Leto** joining *Blade Runner 2...* **Donald Glover** in the frame for young Lando Calrissian in *Han Solo...* **Ray Fisher** set to appear as Cyborg in *The Flash...* **Keanu Reeves** starring in clone drama *Replicas...* Devo's **Mark Mothersbaugh** scoring *Thor: Ragnarok...* **Doug Liman** directing *Justice League Dark*, uniting the DCU's occult heroes... **Lea Seydoux** and **Charlie Hunnam** teaming in an unnamed SF love story directed by **Drake Doremus... **Michael Peña** joining horror thriller *The Bringing at Columbia Pictures...* **Rainn Wilson** starring in giant shark tale *Meg...* Twentieth Century Fox adapting **Alma Katsu's** cannibalism tale *The Hunger...* **Doctor Who's Karen Gillan** to join *The Rock*, **Kevin Hart** and **Jack Black** in *Jake Kasdan's Jumanji...* **Ben Whishaw** joining *Mary Poppins Returns...* **Scott Eastwood** to star in SF tale *Ecstasia...* **Brad Pitt** chasing **David Fincher** to direct *World War Z 2...* **Jason Momoa** rumoured to star in *The Crow...***



“It's the genesis of He-Man. We want it to be clicking on all cylinders”

mystery probed and prodded by a bunch of foolhardy medical students in 1990's *Flatliners*. Original star **Kiefer Sutherland** reveals that 2017's remake is, in fact, a sequel... if you squint. "I play a professor at the medical university," he tells *Metro*. "It is never stated but it will probably be very clearly understood that I'm the same character I was in the original *Flatliners* but that I have changed my name and I've done some things to move on from the experiments that we were doing in the original film..." The latest intake of death-obsessed undergrads includes **Ellen Page**, **Nina Dobrev** and **Kiersey Clemons**. *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo's Niels Arden Oplev* directs.

UP FROM THE DEPTHS!

GODZILLA

What's the collective noun for Toho Studios' legendary big green lizard? A stomp of Godzillas? A roar? A trample? Whatever the case, the city-trashing beast with the atomic halitosis is spawning multiple incarnations on the big screen. As Japan unleashes *Godzilla Resurgence* and Hollywood preps *Godzilla 2* for March 2019 – soon to be followed by 2020's *Godzilla Vs Kong* – it feels as though we're all in danger of being squelched beneath a scaly prehistoric heel. Now comes word that Toho are adding to global Godzillageddon with an animated movie. Set for release next year, it'll be co-directed by **Kobun Shizuno** (*Detective Conan*) and **Hirofumi Seshita** (*Knights Of Sidonia*) from a screenplay by **Gen Urobuchi** (*Psycho-Pass: The Movie*).

HE-MAN TALK!

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

The *Masters Of The Universe* reboot may appear trapped in Skeletor's private dungeon of Development Hell but director **McG** remains determined to raise the power sword in the name of Eternia. "We're in the middle of a script polish, and it's my absolute passion," he tells IGN. "I'm laser-focused on that being my next film." McG also reveals that he's hoping to steal a little Marvel mojo for the project. "We want to honour the fanbase, first and foremost," he says. "We also need to be cognisant of the incredible resonance of what Kevin Feige is doing with Marvel, and the balance of full-bodied entertainment – that it's both credible and emotional, action-packed, and the story of a hero's journey. It's the genesis of He-Man, it's the becoming of He-Man. We want it to be clicking on all cylinders in that regard. We're not going to stop until we get it right." Words to bellow from the ramparts of Castle Grayskull if ever we heard them.

QUEEN OF THE ROCKETMEN!

THE ROCKETEERS

Disney's igniting the jetpack for what's being pitched as half a sequel and half a reboot of Joe Johnston's pulp adventure. Based on **Dave Stevens'** graphic novel, the 1990 original gave us Bill Campbell as Cliff Secord, a sky-soaring stunt pilot battling mobsters and Nazis in a throwback to the cliffhanging serials of the '30s and '40s. The new movie is set six years later: Cliff Secord has vanished and the Cold War is beginning to get frosty. A new Rocketeer steps up, a young African-American female pilot determined to prevent a scheming rocket scientist from stealing the coveted jetpack tech. *The Jungle Book's Brigham Taylor* produces alongside **Blake Griffin** and **Ryan Kalil**. The screenplay's set to be written by **Matt Spicer** and **Max Winkler** – son of the Fonzy himself, Henry, a fact that deserves a big thumbs-up and a laidback "Heyyyyyy...", if not a full-on "Whoa..." ●



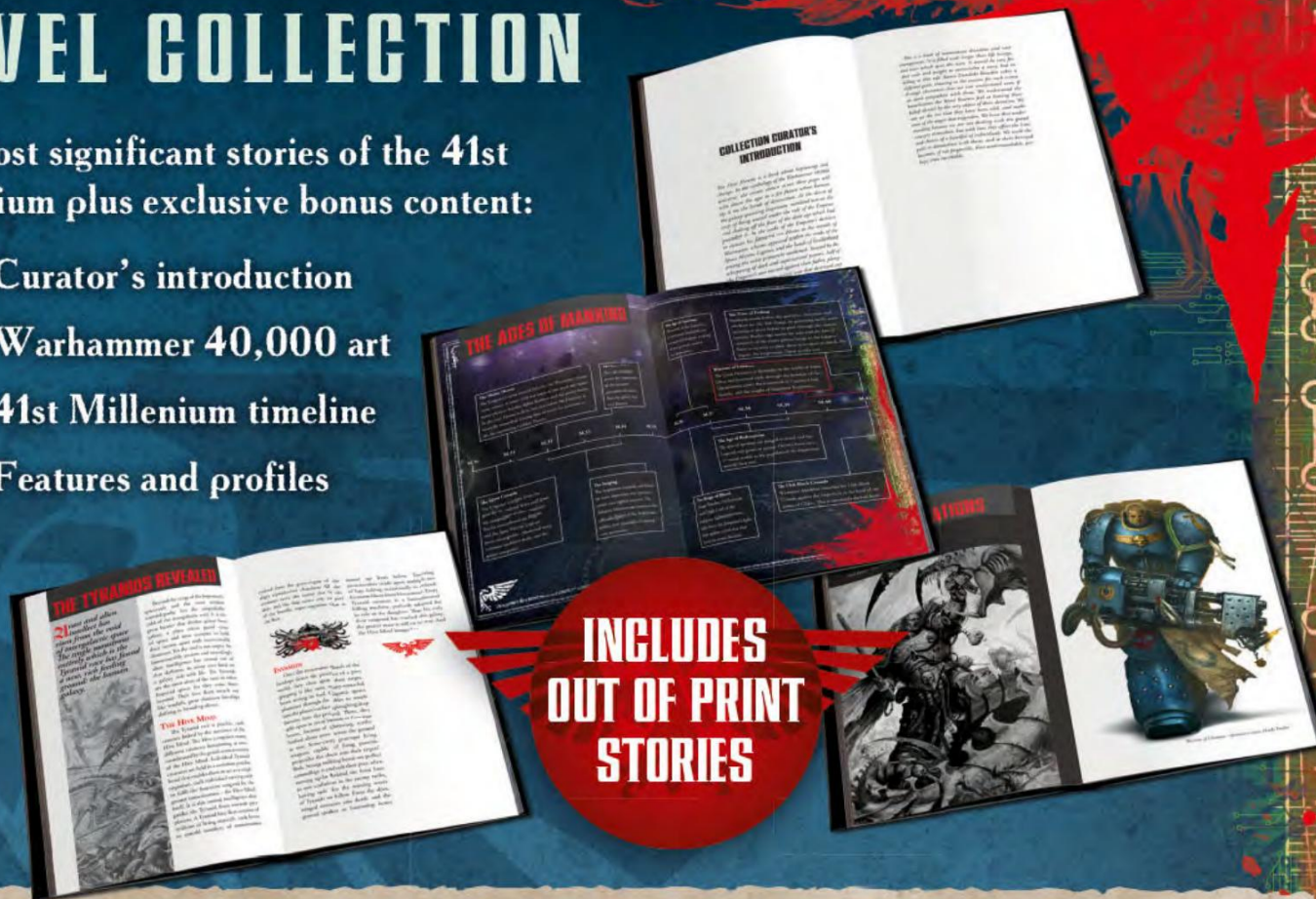
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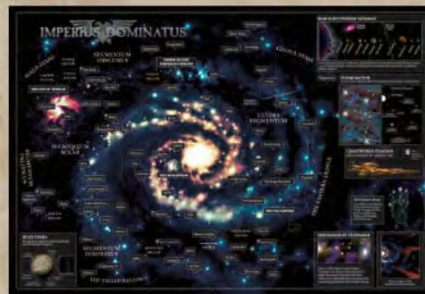
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//// SFX HAILING FREQUENCIES OPEN! ////

First Contact



THIS MONTH'S COMMUNICATIONS MONITOR

RUSSELL LEWIN, PRODUCTION EDITOR



What a funny year 2016 is turning out to be on the big screen. Several

of the blockbusters have disappointed (the likes of *Independence Day*, *Batman V Superman* and *Suicide Squad*?) and others have perhaps not made as much moolah as the makers were hoping (*Ghostbusters*, *Star Trek Beyond* and *The BFG* f'rinstance). And many of the above have been the subject of lively debate, some of which we have on these here pages. We love debate though, so keep sending opinions in to the contact points opposite. PS: Llama God, where are you?!

SFX Hot Topic Your views on the month's big issue

#STAR TREK BEYOND

➔ **Mickeyleon 48, Twitter** It truly felt like a long version of an original *Star Trek* episode in the modern era. Job done for fans of the show.

➔ **Andy Hall, Facebook** Loved it, and it felt closer to *Star Trek* than the previous two. Tone was good, loved the diplomatic stuff, the Enterprise looked glorious, great action, loved seeing more of the Federation and a bit of *Trek* history.

➔ **Andrew Halliday, Facebook** A great (but not perfect – there were some silly bits) ensemble piece, with something for everybody to do. Pegg clearly understands the team dynamic.

➔ **Leland Reibling, Facebook** A rip-off of *Avatar*. Everything looked like recycled old film from previous *Trek* movies but more blurry. Except this time Spock is crying all the time and Scotty is a fool and has to ask people how to fix things. Still, my favourite movie for the summer compared to the rest of the Hollywood trash.

SFX Wow, you really didn't like other summer movies then.

➔ **Rob Perry, Facebook** It was the movie *Into Darkness* should have been. Telling its own

standalone story with subtle nods to the larger franchise, without directly lifting entire narrative chunks. The greatest compliment I can give it is it felt like an original series episode writ large. Cracking stuff.

➔ **Tony, Twitter** I felt motion sickness watching it! As a result I hated it.

➔ **Paul Starkey, Facebook** Absolutely loved it! So much better than *Into Darkness*!

➔ **Gary Mancini, Facebook** I didn't think much of it. Found the story plodding.

➔ **Eddie Fowler, Facebook** Extremely average, and obvious; the screenplay lacks anything original or imaginative. Giant "meh".

➔ **Robert William Graham, Facebook** Loved it. It felt like a big budget episode of the classic original series with better effects. The best of the rebooted movies.

➔ **Jenny Davies, Facebook** A lot of fun; great ensemble cast, copious amounts of humour and impressive setpieces.

➔ **Jonathan Savage, Facebook** Brilliant, definitely up there with *First Contact* and *Voyage Home*.

➔ **Bo Zo, Facebook** Best to worst imo: II, III, FC, VI, IV, ST09, STID, STB, TMP, GEN, V, NEM, INS (but STB may go up after a rewatch).

➔ **David Yates, Facebook** A big improvement on the previous one. I particularly liked the scenes

They only went and made a good odd-numbered *Trek* film.





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“It felt like a long version of an original episode”

with Spock and McCoy, especially when they *finally* admitted that they were friends of each other and not just mutual friends of Kirk's. So sad to see Chekov, knowing that Anton Yelchin is no longer with us.

🔥 **Scott James, Facebook** Some niggles, most notably the “race to get to where the bad-guy is going before he does a thing with the McGuffin to destroy everyone” shtick, but overall it was very enjoyable.

🔥 **Marc Bourgeois, Facebook** The odds of the Enterprise vs the swarm were too big against the Enterprise. No way they could've survived. Crew looks tired. The throwback of 20th century technology that ends up saving the day is a bit much.

🔥 **Gary Lee Kydd, Facebook** Fantastic movie, loved it right from the get go. Plenty of nice little music nods to the old *Star Trek* themes too. Took the whole family wife and kids, a 10/10 from all. Pegg nailed it – he truly knows his genre. It's good to have a guy who knows the fans and is at the helm.

SFX So reasonably positive overall, then. Will the forthcoming TV series get as good a reception, I wonder...

Look out for the next SFX Hot Topic at bit.ly/SFXHotTopic



Looking forward to number four, Uhura?



Don't see it if you hate the colour green.

#YES, THEY HAVE NO DICKS

🔥 **James Kinsley, Norwich** I didn't hold out a huge amount of hope for *Ghostbusters*, specifically because I wasn't a fan of Paul Feig's *Bridesmaids*, or Melissa McCarthy's broad comedy roles. But like all rational human beings, I was dismayed by the rabid misogyny that greeted the announcement of an all-female remake of the '80s classic. The idea that a film can ruin another film, or anyone's childhood, is patent nonsense, as the fuss over the *Star Wars* prequels proved. But the anti-feminist nature of the criticism was far uglier than anything *The Phantom Menace* provoked. As a result, I wished the film all the luck in the world on principle, and went to see it myself for the same reason. And I'm really glad I did, it's a really fun ride. Plenty of nods to the original, some subtle, some less so, but also plenty going on in its own right. The performances are mainly great – Wiig, Hemsworth and Jones are all superb, and McCarthy reins in some of her excessive tendencies to create a very likeable character. McKinnon was a little heavy-handed for my tastes, but not to the detriment of the film as a whole. There's a lot of

great gags, decent effects, the story is serviceable if not groundbreaking, and Omar from *The Wire*'s in it. What's not to like?

🔥 **Medium Atomic Weight** Haven't got a clue what the film was about – the orange stripes on the boiler suits kept sending my eyes wonky. **SFX** It was fun, but a pity they didn't have a better villain and more conflict. Thanks to all the internet battles about its “politics”, it may be a film that will only be able to be properly judged years down the line.

#NO JUSTICE

🔥 **David Cookson, email** Question of the month for me is: does anyone at SFX like *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*? I really liked it and have now watched it several times. In the interest of balance, I prefer a Superman who is optimistic, Doomsday was wasted and also way too big (look back at *Superman #75* for perspective), and why has Lex designed logos for future Justice League members?! Re: Lex, Eisenberg is watchable but perhaps he should have been playing a different character. On to the positives of the *Ultimate Edition* review: this cut shows much more manipulation by Lex, blow-torcing bodies to look like the result of heat vision and the →



"Let's forget our differences and have a big slurpy kiss."

extended subplot of Clark investigating the fear of regular citizens in Gotham of Batman all added to why the two heroes end up in a fight. Sorry *SFX*, but in a world where *Fantastic Four*, *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, *Green Lantern* and *Amazing Spider-Man 2* exist, no way should *BvS* score a measly 2.5 stars.

SFX Hey, I liked some of those films! But not everyone at *SFX* hates *Dawn Of Justice*. I don't, for instance. Largely because I haven't seen it. So you reckon I should watch the *Ultimate Edition* rather than the normal cut? What do you think, dear readers – which should I view?

#MATT'S THE LIMIT

🗨️ **Azhar Sahota, email** I like *Doctor Who*. I like Matt Lucas. But what I do not like is Matt Lucas's Nardole character becoming a regular on the show. In fact, it fills me with absolute dread. And is it not also a vote of no-confidence in Pearl Mackie? We were all sure Catherine Tate was going to be awful and she turned out to be great, so let's hope against hope that history repeats himself.

SFX I like your optimism. In these times in the world of *Doctor Who* optimism is much-needed I feel.

#SPOILT BRATS

🗨️ **Ray Adams, Brundall** Just a quick response to points raised in issue 277's First Contact. I don't like spoilers myself, but take responsibility for avoiding them. New ep of *Game Of Thrones* airing? Give Twitter a break for a bit. It's not difficult. That said, it's equally easy to avoid shouting out big spoilers online too. If you've just got back from the cinema, don't jump online to say "ZOMG HAN SOLO'S [REDACTED]!!!" Just think, is it possible to give an opinion without divulging details? Do that then.

I do, however, take issue with comments like "How much of a fan are you if you didn't get to a midnight screening?" Umm, a fan with kids? Or a job that won't allow for that? "People need to get organised and watch the thing they're into." Same deal. Or maybe my partner doesn't like that show, so I can't watch it when it's broadcast. Or I can't afford Sky, so have to wait till other options are available. Real life can impact some folk in different ways. It's all too easy to assume that what's possible for you is possible for everyone, so anyone who doesn't see things as quickly as you is just slack. But life doesn't work like

“No way should *BvS* score a measly 2.5 stars”

that, try seeing it from other people's perspectives before getting too judgemental.

SFX Wise words, Ray. If more people could see things from others' point of view the world would be a better place.

#TOO MUCH OF TOO YOUNG

🗨️ **Chris Nelson, email** Am I the only one not enamoured that the new *Spider-Man* film, and the sequels if there are any, will only feature Peter Parker as a high school student? For me, Peter became a much more interesting character when he graduated. Around the time that John Romita came to *The Amazing Spider-Man* in issue 39 Peter changed, retaining his appealing streak of vulnerability but becoming less geeky and less insecure. He dated goddesses like Gwen Stacy and Mary Jane

Watson for heaven's sake! The idea of Peter as a high school geek is therefore massively out of date and will limit the sort of stories the films tell.

SFX Good point. But of the two actors who've played him in films so far, I vastly preferred the geekier version by Tobey Maguire to Andrew Garfield (though Maguire showed inner strength in his pitch-perfect portrayal too).

#A GRAVE MATTER

🗨️ **Ann Bains, email** *Suicide Squad* is a flawed but still-worth-watching film. But the reactions of some of its supporters has been laughable, particularly rubbishing Rotten Tomatoes for giving it bad reviews. Rotten Tomatoes is a website that collates reviews, it doesn't write them! Talk about shooting the messenger! These people need to get a bit of perspective.

SFX I've heard it said that the way Rotten Tomatoes ratings are now worked out actually means that films now get a more generous score than before. Can anyone verify whether that's the case?

🗨️ **Oliver Fitzsimmons, email** It certainly wasn't a great movie, but it was not bad either; definitely not bad enough to warrant a 31-42% rating that the majority of critics have decided. I could understand 5/10, but otherwise it just seems spiteful against the people who worked hard on the film. I know the fact that people put effort into something doesn't mean anything if the end product is awful, but it wasn't really; lots of creative visuals, 90% less Zack Snyder, fairly ambitious character roster, and more humour than previously seen in this joyless franchise.

Leto was fine... A decent performance, but failed to even come close to the quality of previous *Joker* portrayals. It doesn't matter that he basically had a glorified cameo, he should have seemed like a maelstrom, not a light patter.

#KRALL SPACE

🗨️ **Keith Tudor, Romsey** For the second year running Paramount has managed to spoil a big twist in a major new film release. *Star Trek Beyond* was a fun movie with great references to the history of the



Harley Quinn: model prisoner?

series. However, Krall's identity was spoiled in the TV spots leading up to the film's release. They showed Idris Elba looking like Idris Elba, making a log entry (rather than the very alien-looking Krall). This along with a crashed warp 4 ship and it doesn't take a massive leap to work out who he is. Just like John Connor's Terminator reveal in last year's *Genisys*, this spoiler ruined a big reveal in major release.

SFX Ah, but as you went into the film did you still have in mind that TV spot? Or did you only remember it at the end of the film? Crucial evidence as to whether they did wrong, I'd say!

#WE ALSO HEARD FROM

Lucy Samson, email I recently bought *Terrahawks* on Blu-ray because I loved it as a kid. Mmm. The difference between a child's critical faculties and an adult's can be pretty big can't they?

Charlie Keen, email Chuffed there's going to be a *Rocketeer* sequel. A great, underrated film!

Adam Butcher, email You should have covered *The Legend Of Tarzan*. A superhero film if ever I saw one, and not a bad one either.

SFX Indeed. Which gives me the chance to mention a splendid new book called *Tarzan On Film*, by Scott Tracy Griffin, out now.

Bryn Hughes, Wrexham Long ago, Mandrake the Magician was going to be played on the big screen by Marcello Mastroianni. Long ago, it was going to be Kevin Kline. Now, according to Nick Setchfield's September column, it's going to be Sacha Baron Cohen. "Development Hell", indeed.

SFX Facts – we love 'em!



Your sci-fi memorabilia valued by the experts from auctioneers Vectis

→ Sam Hall says: "I was given this twistable Amazing Spider-Man about 10 years ago and told it was from the '70s or '80s and very valuable. As you can see, it's unopened, and Spidey is completely untwisted. I'd love to know if it is worth lots of money as I could do with retiring from my job (joking!)."



KATHY TAYLOR OF VECTIS SAYS:

In 1991 a small toy company called Just Toys (New York USA) released the line of Marvel Superhero Bend-ems – rubber figures that were both bendable and poseable.

In 1993 Just Toys released *Star Wars* Bend-ems figures. These figures were the first to reignite interest for new *Star Wars* toys. Each figure was originally packaged on blister card-type packaging. Since the figures were produced in quantity (and they were never a popular line back in the day) they've remained cheap and easy to source on the secondary market. Carded figures rarely cost more than a few pounds, and you can buy collections of loose figures for even less.

If you've got a piece of memorabilia you'd like us to feature, send us a photo with a few words about what it means to you, to sfx@future.net, using the subject line Cash In The AT-AT.

SFX

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Dithery buyers, the velodrome, steam fair scares, two days/two curries, a vegan wedding



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"Welcome to my legs"

CAPTAIN MARVEL

Wishlist

WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE IN UPCOMING MOVIES AND TV

Brie Larson is flying in to front Marvel's movie. But what baggage should come with her?

Illustration by Paul Garner

YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

HEY, MARVEL/DISNEY (OR WHOEVER), THIS IS WHAT OUR READERS WANT FROM THE MCU'S FIRST FEMALE-LED BLOCKBUSTER!

MAKE MINE MARVEL

1 Many of you are optimistic about the movie, having faith in Marvel to continue making accessible action blockbusters. And **Glen Harrison** wants to utilise the massiveness of its universe: "I would like to see supporting roles for some of the recurring-but-slightly-overlooked female characters of the MU, such as Christine Everhart, Lady Sif, Darcy Lewis and Bobbi Morse."

HAVE QUALITY VILLAINS

2 Another superhero movie, another chance for some great supervillains. You had many ideas, but one in particular caught our eye: "The Absorbing Man is a brilliant villain whose appearance on the big screen is long overdue. To play him? Ben Kingsley. Seriously. Think of him in *Sexy Beast* – muscular and terrifying," says **Big Brian**.

LOOK TO THE STARS

3 Such is the versatility of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, many of you mused

as to what sort of Marvel movie it should be. *Guardians*-like cosmic, or more Earthbound? **Medium Atomic Weight** comes in at an angle: "I'd be willing to bend comic book history a little if it gives us the best-superhero-movie-title-ever: *Captain Marvel & The Starjammers*."

LET YOUNG EYES GAZE UPON IT

4 With the likes of *Deadpool* and *Suicide Squad* getting 15 certificates, and 12s like *Dawn Of Justice* and *X-Men Apocalypse* hardly for the nippers, some of you want more family-friendly fare. "Make it a movie suitable for kids to see," writes **Charlie Hall**. "Sick of all these superhero epics that youngsters can't go to. (And I mean make it a PG, not a 12.)"

BE SUPER, GIRL

5 You do want to take one leaf out of DC's book – **Claire Smith** was one of several with this sort of comment: "Adopt the same sort of positive, feel-good vibe as the *Supergirl* TV series has. None of that mopey, greyish nonsense." And so say all of us.

And that's not all they want...

→ **Laurie McHale** The Kree are going to have to be in it, so it would be neat if the Supreme Intelligence put in an appearance. A Mar-Vell cameo wouldn't go amiss either, but I suppose they wouldn't want to make it too much like *Green Lantern*.

→ **Seren Foster** Michael B Jordan as Chemistro. He was very good, and physical, in *Creed*, so I can see him as a perfect supervillain (and so much better than a superhero – hello Johnny Storm). [The fact Jordan's already signed up to play the baddie in *Black Panther* may well count him out of this one, but you can hope – Ed]

→ **Chris A** Have nods to the fact that there have been several

Captain Marvels over the years. In fact, make that the centrepiece of the plot – a load of battling Captain Marvels!

→ **Karl Speed** Andy Serkis was a sort of Klaw in *Age Of Ultron* – get him back and make him Klaw proper.

→ **Matt Miles** Have her pop up in at least one Marvel film before her own in 2019. *Guardians 2* and *Avengers 3* come to mind, but surprise us with another one.

→ **Keith** The PR shouldn't bang on about the female element; bang on about her being a potentially great superhero in a potentially great film. Don't run the risk of making it another political football.

→ **Lucinda P** Make it considerably better than *Elektra*. Considerably.

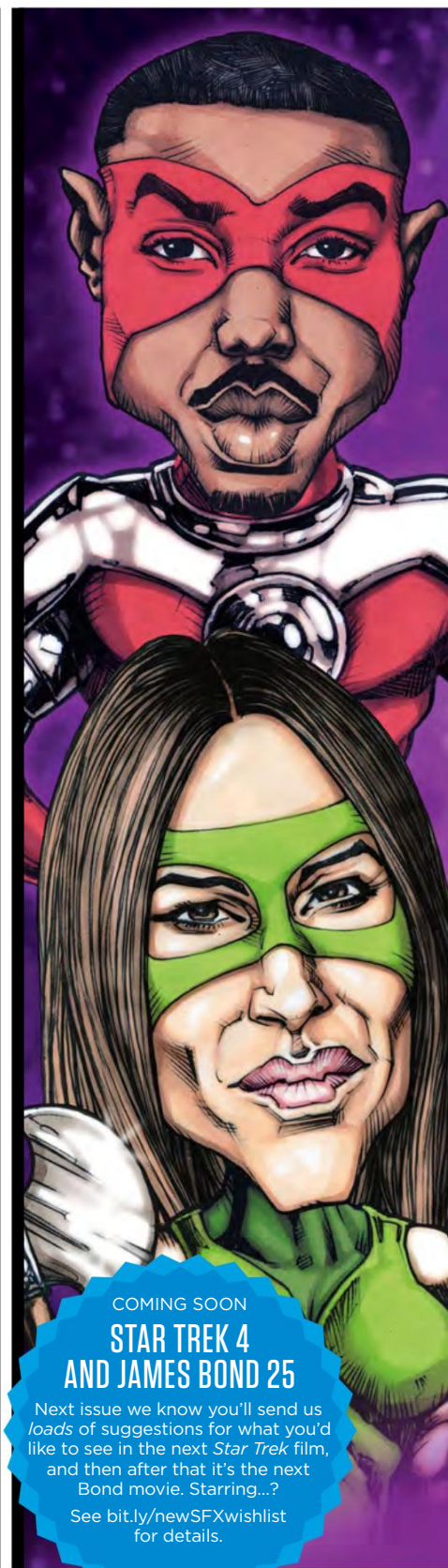
→ **Red Rose** I think whatever we say now is pretty academic: the type of film *Captain Marvel* will be will surely be dictated by *Wonder Woman*, and what the critical and commercial reaction to that is.

→ **Alison L** Make it come sooner! 2019 is ages away.

→ **Grumpy Chris** Don't make it. Captain Marvel is an average character. Concentrate on the characters who are reliable classics – Spidey, Iron Man, Hulk, Cap etc.

→ **The Professor** Having Battleaxe as a villain would make for some terrific woman-on-woman violent action. Played by someone like Hilary Swank or Jennifer Garner.

→ **Mike G** Make it *Marvelous*. [Please leave – Ed]



COMING SOON
**STAR TREK 4
AND JAMES BOND 25**

Next issue we know you'll send us loads of suggestions for what you'd like to see in the next *Star Trek* film, and then after that it's the next Bond movie. Starring...?

See bit.ly/newSFXwishlist for details.

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YOUR DREAM CAST

CHEMISTRO

Michael B Jordan

KLAW

Andy Serkis

CAPTAIN MARVEL

Brie Larson

BATTLEAXE

Jennifer Garner

ABSORBING MAN

Ben Kingsley





Penny Dreadful

SFX's high priestess of horror

THE JOYS OF SUMMER

What a wonderful time to be a horror fan. Not only is it the season of FrightFest but this month I've seen a handful of brilliant chillers heading your way in September and October which prove how gorgeously diverse my favourite genre is. Details below, but also in September look out for **Morgan**, **Blair Witch** and **Under The Shadow** – more from me on these next month, and also what I caught at FrightFest.

SILENT NIGHT

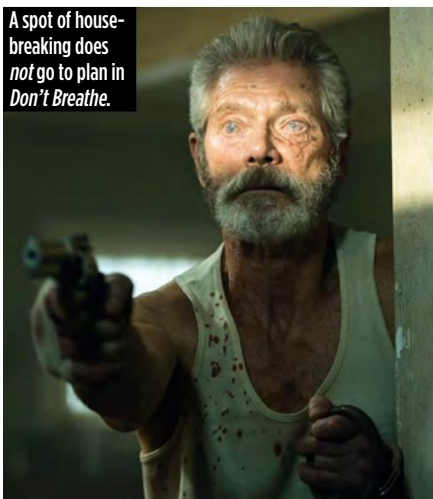
An absolute work of genius (one small and unnecessary beat aside), **Don't Breathe** comes from Fele Alvarez, the director of the *Evil Dead* remake, and is the first film from Sam Raimi's Ghost House Pictures that's genuinely great. Jane Levy stars as one of a group of scuzzy kids who break into the house of a blind veteran in order to steal his money, but find him more formidable and strange than they expected. It looks gorgeous, it's packed with very smart setpieces, and it begins with this incredible sweeping shot of the house, touring all the potential weapons that might come into play – it's the best bit of "Chekov's gun" (whereby if you see a gun in the first act, it must be fired by the end of the third) tension-building I've seen in ages. Better than *Hush*, slightly reminiscent of the best of the *Final Destination* movies, it's ace, except for one misjudged plot twist that changes things. No spoilers, but Sam, Fele, if you want to drop me a line before the next one I'll be happy to have a read of the script.

GREASED FRIGHTENING

How do you feel about wang gags? If it's an especially funny wang? The grindhouse horror event of the year will almost certainly be **The Greasy Strangler**, and your feelings about farts, wangs and, um, grease, will strongly affect your enjoyment of the film. It's about a father, Big Ronnie, and his son Big Brayden, who run a crap disco walking tour. Brayden falls in love, Ronnie gets jealous, and tries to pinch his lady with his bizarrely revealing crotchless disco suit and amusing/disquieting aforementioned wang. Also, he greases himself up of an evening and goes on murderous rampages. *The Greasy Strangler* channels early

Good zombies, bad kids, awful politics and a greasy treat

A spot of house-breaking does not go to plan in *Don't Breathe*.



Slather up with *The Greasy Strangler*.



Any Taylor-Joy is *Morgan*.

John Waters, is highly repetitious, deliberately annoying and wilfully disgusting but very funny. Eyeballs pop, grease is slathered, farts abound, and there's a hilarious bit around the mispronunciation of the word "potato". See it.

CAREY MOVIE

A zombie movie about a beautiful little girl is the wistful and grown-up horror of the month. **The Girl With All The Gifts**, adapted from Mike Carey's novel by Carey himself, is an atmospheric, moving and relevant chiller in which a teacher in a military encampment (Gemma Arterton) forms a bond with one of her charges, a bright, fascinating child called Melanie who loves myths and legends, is kind and generous, good at maths and geography and has a craving for human flesh. A fresh take on an age-old genre, with a killer ending.

CRIME OF THE YEAR

Okay, so it's not all zombies and wang gags in the world of horror. Out now, **The Purge: Election Year** was a huge disappointment. I liked the first one – clever, new, self-contained and one of the first genuinely original horror franchise ideas in years (if we accept that *Paranormal Activity* is just *Blair Witch* in a house). I liked the second one, too, taking us into the wider world and introducing Frank Grillo's sympathetic Leo Barnes. *Election Year*, on the other hand, is rubbish. The politics are facile, the characters one-dimensional and the dialogue is awful. This month, it's Ghost House: 1 Blumhouse: 0.

Dreadful things to watch

One of the most '90s movies of all time, *Stigmata* is hitting Blu-ray for the first time on 17 October. Patricia Arquette plays an atheist hairdresser who begins to suffer the wounds of Christ. At the time it didn't get great reviews but I rewatched this recently and it's actually very compelling if a bit pre-*Da Vinci Code* nonsense. Worth a revisit.





WORTH THE WEIGHT?

Author **James Lovegrove** on taking on Alan Moore's beast of a novel

It sits beside my reading chair: an enormous slab of ring-bound A4. It is like a paper version of the Monolith in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. As with that alien artefact, it promises knowledge, advancement, revelation. Yet it is forbidding too. Daunting.

It is a photocopied proof of Alan Moore's forthcoming second novel *Jerusalem*. The finished book runs to just shy of 1,200 pages, roughly 600,000 words, so the publicity material says. And I have volunteered to write a 750-word review of it for the *Financial Times*. As that newspaper's tame science fictioner, and someone who has read and loved practically everything Moore has ever written, I am unquestionably the man for the job. All the same, looking at the book in front of me, with its single-spaced, thickly-paragraphed text, its sheer gravity-warping mass, I am apprehensive. I have budgeted three days to complete the task. Approximately 400 pages per day. Is it enough? Here goes. Wish me luck.

DAY 1

There are no page numbers. That's my first thought. This appears to be a typescript, looking much like the sheets that would have churned forth from Moore's printer, and someone has not paginated it. How can I know when today's target of 400 has been reached?

I can't, so I halt at a chapter break roughly a third of the way in. I use a ruler to judge my progress, 2cm out of 6. Reading calculated by depth.

So far, the narrative has hopped through time, from one viewpoint character to another, anchoring itself in the geography of a single place, its author's native Northampton. I'm not conscious yet of an overarching plot. Maybe there isn't one.

Goal achieved. Time for a nice slice of fruitcake, my usual post-work tippie. The rock 'n' roll lifestyle of a middle-aged author.

DAY 2

Come on, James. You've read other very long books: Dickens, Moby-Dick, House of Leaves, The Stand. Twice. You can do this.

I remind myself that one of the joys of reviewing professionally is getting paid for an occupation I normally do for fun. I would have read *Jerusalem* regardless. Money for writing about it is a bonus. Mustn't grumble.

Slice of fruitcake? Don't mind if I do. A tasty reward for the day's labours.

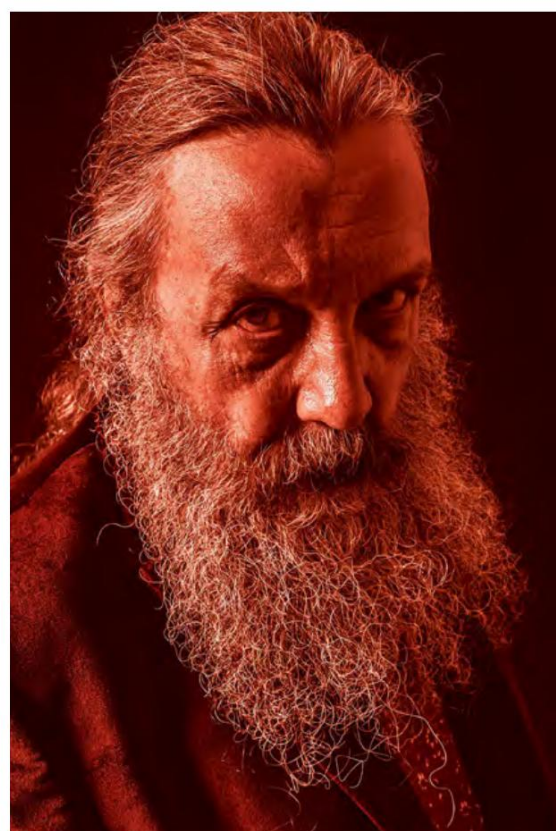
DAY 3

Final push. Usually I'd savour a book like this, relish it like a gourmet meal, taking time over the courses. But there are deadlines. When Business and Pleasure intertwine, the former always comes first, leaving the latter ravished, dishevelled, and feeling vaguely dissatisfied and a little bit ashamed.

Jerusalem strikes me as obsessive, personal, Moore's largest and most intense artistic statement yet, a sprawling piece of psychogeography that makes the parochial universal and the temporary eternal. I am glad to have read it. I have taken copious notes. I am ready to produce my 750 words on it. I am also boggle-eyed and somewhat mind-blown.

Fruitcake? Well, after immersing myself in Moore's polymathic, encyclopaedic genius for three days solid, that word is beginning to take on a different meaning. But if we're talking the raisin-studded teatime treat... I reckon I've earned it. ●

James Lovegrove's Age of Heroes is out now from Solaris and reviewed on p109.



**"I HAVE
BUDGETED
THREE DAYS TO
COMPLETE THE
TASK. IS IT
ENOUGH?"**

CONSIDER PHLEBAS

by Iain M Banks, 1987

Gareth L Powell recalls our first close encounter with the Culture



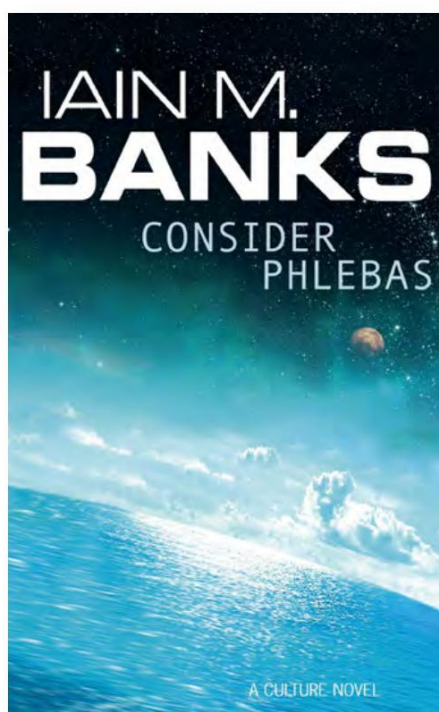
The Culture is a galaxy-wide, utopian meta-civilisation. Between 1987 and 2012, it formed the backdrop for nine extraordinary novels, one desperately poignant novella, and a brace of short stories. Of these, *Consider Phlebas* was the first novel to be published.

The book is set against a war between the Culture and an alien race known as the Idirans. But rather than focus on the people and machines fighting the war, the novel instead follows the fortunes of Bora Horza Gobuchul, a humanoid working for the Idirans, as he makes his way across the galaxy in an effort to recover a Mind (one of the sentient, hyper-intelligent machines that control the Culture's warships) from Schar's World – a planet set aside as a monument to an extinct civilisation.

Along the way, Horza falls in with a group of mercenaries eking an existence on the edge of the wider conflict, and their catastrophically botched missions provide the episodic structure of much of the novel.

For me, though, the heart of the novel is the relationship between Horza and his reluctant would-be nemesis, the Culture agent Perostek Balveda. Although on different sides in the war, the two have a tremendous respect for each other, to the point where neither can quite bring themselves to kill the other, and Balveda essentially comes to act as Horza's conscience.

The war dominates the story. It exists in the narrative rather like a distant thunderstorm. You can feel the violence of it in the air, even if the characters never become fully embroiled in the furious exchanges that are happening, mostly unseen, amid the stars.



We are shown glimpses of different races and worlds, and hints of a much larger canvas. This might have been the first Culture novel published, but it feels as if it takes place in an already-established universe – possibly due to the fact Banks had apparently already penned drafts of three other novels before achieving publication with *Consider Phlebas*.

The other great strength is Banks's ability to make us sympathise with deeply flawed characters, however misguided or immoral

they might be. Even the fanatical Idiran warriors are presented sympathetically, when we start to see events through the eyes of one of their number.

Consider Phlebas may not be as celebrated as its follow-ups, *The Player Of Games* (1988) and *Use Of Weapons* (1990), but it still stands head and shoulders above most of the other space opera of the time, and, as it contains the first appearance of the Culture, it occupies an important position in the subgenre's history.

All the familiar Culture ingredients are already in place: the whimsical ship names; the gigantic space habitats; the moral grey areas that exist when a utopian civilisation imposes its will on the galaxy in the name of the greater good. There are also hauntingly-realised setpieces, from the destruction of a massive orbital ring by antimatter bombardment and the crash of a kilometres-long cruise ship into a tabular iceberg, to a one-on-one fight beneath the skirts of a building-sized hovercraft.

I don't want to give any spoilers, but by the end of the book it becomes apparent that this isn't a book about war, but about the cost of war, and the unintended cruelties it justifies.

Thankfully, it is also a first-rate adventure, with all the action and spectacle you could wish for. ●

Gareth L Powell is the author of the BSFA Award-winning Ack-Ack Macaque. He has a new trilogy due from Titan Books in 2017. Find him on Twitter: @garethlpowell.

Like this? Try these!

THE CENTAURI DEVICE by M JOHN HARRISON (1975)

→ Written as a reaction against mainstream space opera, this book, Harrison's third novel, helped pave the way for its reinvention in subsequent decades.



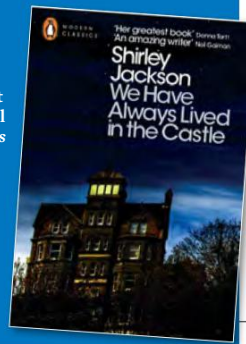
REVELATION SPACE by ALASTAIR REYNOLDS (2000)

→ Reynolds' book sees the squabbling crew members of a vast, decaying starship become embroiled in an archaeologist's obsessive quest to uncover an ancient evil.



NEXT ISSUE ↓

Our next edition of Book Club (in SFX 280, on sale 12 October) has James Smythe writing about Shirley Jackson's final novel *We Have Always Lived In The Castle*, which was published in 1962. If you've never read it – or just fancy giving it another go – now's the time to do so before a top writer gives his opinion.



Next Issue

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ROUGE

After the triumphant return to form of *Red Dwarf X*, the sci-fi sitcom is back for not just one but two new series. Richard Edwards heads on set to find out more...

ONE

f SFX's 13-year-old self could be here now, he'd be so excited his head would explode with the gooeey, pus-filled force of Dave Lister's space mumps. We're sitting in the pilot's seat of Starbug, and we're not ashamed to admit that, in our mind, we're actually flying the ship. We are stopping just short of making the sound effects, though – let's show a modicum of professionalism here...

A short walk around the corner we're in Lister and Rimmer's quarters on Red Dwarf. Alongside the ubiquitous guitar, closer inspection of Lister's bunk reveals a picture of Kochanski (the Chloë Annett vintage) and a poster for his favourite zero-gravity football team, the London Jets. Rimmer's bed below, meanwhile, boasts framed bronze and silver swimming awards.

We wander into the next room and, we have to admit, it's starting to feel odd that so many key parts of a vessel nearly 10 kilometres in length sit so close together. This is the Dwarf's science and medical centre, where an errant Skutter – one of the ship's dogsbod droids – sits alongside a medpod that's been repurposed from Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* (yes, really), and wonderfully analogue control panels populated with knobs, dials and switches. They're so real and tactile it's a mission to resist the urge to fiddle with them.

Just behind is the sort of shadowy spaceship corridor usually frequented by Xenomorphs and – producer Kerry Waddell tells us – decorated with spare parts from *Guardians Of The Galaxy*. We knew all about the “used universe” aesthetic beloved of *Star Wars*, *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, but this approach to recycling is taking the idea to a whole new level.

“Yeah, it's that retro feeling – and our logo has gone retro and analogue-y as well!” says *Red Dwarf's* multi-hyphenate writer, director, producer and co-creator Doug Naylor when we catch up with him in the edit suite a few months later. “It's the ‘change the light bulb’ gag, really. I do like that. It speaks volumes about what *Red Dwarf's*, and where they are.”

LIVING LEGEND

Make no mistake, at 28 years old, *Red Dwarf* is embracing its history. Series X, broadcast in 2012, took things back to basics – just an ordinary guy, a hologram, a mechanoid and the distant descendant of a pet cat living on a spaceship three million years from home. And – crucially – the return of the live studio audience that had been a key component of the show's first six (and eighth) series.

Despite a tricky journey to the screen that involved major rewrites, shifting production



The boys' dress sense is about the same as before.



Life is much easier with a bazookoid in your hand.

“The series took some time to evolve because we had a couple of false starts”

schedules and entire episodes being dropped – “Anyone who’s watched ‘We’re Smegged’ on the DVD of series X will know the difficulties we had,” admits Naylor – it was widely hailed as *Red Dwarf*’s best outing in years, arguably the best since the show’s early ’90s heyday.

So like *Red Dwarf* itself, Starbug, Naylor, and stars Chris Barrie, Craig Charles, Danny John-Jules and Robert Llewellyn, the audience are, unsurprisingly, back for the new shows.

The biggest change this year, however, is arguably the decision to film two series back-to-back – six episodes shooting before Christmas, half a dozen after – with *Red Dwarf XI* launching this month, and series XII airing in 2017.

“Just in terms of the workload, obviously it’s been twice as much, and we’ve been really keen to keep the standard up,” Naylor explains. “It’s been great fun. It’s like the old days, really. And all the cast have said that – what a great time they had – which really is interesting, because we made 12 shows pretty much on the run. Apart from Christmas, there was no real break.”

Although more *Red Dwarf* always seemed a no-brainer for the show’s current home on UKTV’s Dave, 12 wasn’t always the magic number – not least because, when discussions began, Charles was still part of the *Coronation Street* cast.

“The series took some time to evolve, because we had a couple of false starts where we thought we could get Craig out of *Corrie*,” recalls Naylor. “I’d started writing even before the series was fully commissioned. And then it turned out we couldn’t get Craig out of *Corrie*. And then it looked like we could. Then *I’m A Celebrity*... came along, so we were foiled again – and then *Corrie* didn’t want to let him out at all.

“Throughout that period, I was expecting to write six. Then it became apparent that Craig would have to make →



The Cat’s getting a female friend.

the decision whether he was going to leave or not leave – and I was always very confident that he would leave if it came down to having to make that decision, though I don't think he wanted to make that decision at the time. I think he would have loved to have taken another sabbatical from *Corrie*, come and done this and then gone back. But that was not to be. So Craig said, 'Look, if I'm going to leave, I don't think we should do six. I think we should do 12.'

"It's easy to say on the phone, 'Yeah, that makes total sense!'" Naylor laughs.

"Craig was going, 'Surely it's going to be cheaper? You've got the set-up, and we just do the whole 12.'

"I was saying, 'Yeah, you're right! I'm sure it must be cheaper. And UKTV will probably buy that because it means they've got two series...'

"Then I thought, 'Hang on a minute – now I've got to write 12!'"

OLD BUT NEW

While Naylor's staying tight-lipped on plot specifics and guest stars in series XI, we do know that the six episodes will feature an alternative America where technology is forbidden, Lister getting his kidneys stolen, Rimmer finally becoming an officer, a midlife crisis for Kryten, and Cat meeting a female member of his species. In the classic *Red Dwarf* tradition, it's more about standalone episodes than serialised storytelling – though Naylor hints that we're likely to see new sides of the show's lead quartet.

"It's always a great advantage if you can put the episodes out in any order," he says. "We've always kind of avoided series arcs – though it's not that there aren't things that are a little bit arc-y. They're more internal things – seemingly, giving the characters what appears to be good news at the beginning of the episode and fulfilling their dreams, and then confounding that. So you think, for example, 'God, I can't believe we haven't done this with the Cat.' And→



DWARF STARS

We sit down for a chat with Rimmer, Lister, Kryten and the Cat

How long does it take you to slip back into your characters?

CHRIS BARRIE (RIMMER) I think they're kind of with us now after 28 years – it doesn't take long to click back into it.

ROBERT LLEWELLYN (KRYTEN) That was something we noticed when we did *Back To Earth*, when it would have been, I think, 11 or 12 years since any of us had done any *Dwarf*.

BARRIE Even then it didn't seem to take long.

LLEWELLYN The first day we were all on the set, in the costumes, ready to go, I think we all had the same feeling, like we'd had a long weekend off.

Do you think that people feel affectionate about *Red Dwarf* not just because it's a good show, but because it's survived so long?

CRAIG CHARLES (LISTER) I think the longest break was because we were trying to make a movie; that went on for 10 years.

BARRIE Every 18 months, the phone would ring, and someone would say, "Don't do anything for the next three years because..."

LLEWELLYN "...we've got the money!"

BARRIE Then the building blocks seemed to fall away. But the fans were always there to say, "We want more."

CHARLES Now, with Dave repeating it, it's got to a much younger audience. People that come to the conventions and stuff like that, they're not all old farts like us.

LLEWELLYN No, they're kids. Some of them weren't born when we made the last series for the BBC in '98.

BARRIE I think the majority now are way, way younger than us.

DANNY JOHN-JULES (CAT) Some of them weren't born at the time, but watch it now, and they've brought their kids. There's a third generation being dragged along.

The show has always appealed to a young audience. Why do you think that is?

JOHN-JULES Wild abandonment! The first letter I read was from a 13-year-old. I thought, "What are they doing up at this time?"

LLEWELLYN There's certainly a section of young people that just absolutely love it, who are now 13, 14, 15. It doesn't date, that's the bizarre thing. Watching *Red Dwarf* from 1993, there might be a couple of jokes where we refer to people in the news at that time, but they're so small.

CHARLES I think with it being set in the future, it gave itself a bit of legs. Whereas if you go back to *The Young Ones* now, which was so firmly set in the '80s, it's so dated.

Do you think *Red Dwarf* would have a chance of being commissioned today?

CHARLES It was a freak that it got commissioned in the first place. Imagine going to a BBC executive and saying, "Great idea for a show. One guy – he's three million years into deep space. Everyone else is dead. His only

“It's almost primarily for fans because they're begging for more *Red Dwarf*”



You know you've missed them.

companions are a hologram and a life form evolved from the ship's cat."

BARRIE So to answer your question, no, I don't think we'd get commissioned.

The characters must be brilliant creations, because they still work 28 years later, and you've never really had to retool them...

LLEWELLYN It's enormously down to the writing. Doug [Naylor] doesn't like us saying so – he always gets embarrassed – but that's the reason that I think it's lasted, because the quality of the writing is so extraordinary.

CHARLES There's a chemistry between us that is unusual. If you did it with four different actors, you'd have a very different show.

LLEWELLYN There's quite a lot of unspoken understanding of each other's performances. I don't think you can achieve that without having done years and years of it.

CHARLES And we're mature enough now to give each other lines as well. It'd be like, "That line doesn't work for me, but it'd work for you." You swap the lines around sometimes.

LLEWELLYN I'm always desperately trying to give my lines away. "I have a really complicated speech on page six. Chris would do that brilliantly." [Laughs]

Do you all have an idea of what you think good Red Dwarf is?

LLEWELLYN In a way, the joy of it is, it is a sitcom. So in a sense, every episode is a fresh start. It's still a naff, guilt-ridden, rubbish mechanoid. A vain Cat. A slobby Lister. And an uptight Rimmer. Those basic elements are still there. But there's so many variants of that within it. That's what I love about the scripts.

CHARLES I think good *Red Dwarf* is very much character-based. It's a gang show. It's

about the characters' different reactions to a certain event, or something like that.

LLEWELLYN There's tiny little things that any of us can do that will crack the rest of us up. It's not necessarily a script thing. It's a look, it's a little pause, a beat, a delivery, or something like that. Danny's entrance or exit...

JOHN-JULES *Porridge*, *Rising Damp*, that kind of "four characters stuck in a place" thing. Those were the kind of shows we wanted to be in.

Did getting the audience back for series X feel like getting back to the early days?

LLEWELLYN Yeah, we all wanted that.

CHARLES Then again, it's careful what you wish for, because they've been trying to get us to make a *Red Dwarf* movie for years, and a *Red Dwarf* movie would be very like series IX in many ways. You've got no live audience, no laugh track...

LLEWELLYN It re-found its home as a sitcom – a sitcom recorded in front of an audience.

CHARLES We're natural show-offs. As soon as the audience come in, the performances pump in.

How much of a priority is Red Dwarf for everyone? Do you do what you can to clear your diary to make sure it happens?

LLEWELLYN The thing is, it's literally years in advance that we're planning it. So it's not like, "Could you do next month?"

BARRIE Meeting fans at various things, it's almost primarily for them, because they're begging for more *Red Dwarf*.

JOHN-JULES Begging. Every time you talk to them, they're begging.

Craig, you had to quit Coronation Street to do series XI and XII. Was that a big decision?

CHARLES It was a big decision because of my 10 years on that show. My family are all there. My kids go to school there now, so yeah. When I asked them if I could have some time off to make it, they said, "We've given you so much time off to do other things, *Red Dwarf X* and [*I'm A Celebrity...*] and all that. No." It was a case of it's either them or us, really. And I've known these guys for 28 years.

JOHN-JULES What we'd say in our autobiographies, that's why he came back!

CHARLES *Red Dwarf* is, I have to say, the defining moment in all of our careers. I can't turn my back on it.

BARRIE Absolutely.

LLEWELLYN Oh god, yeah.

JOHN-JULES You don't bite the hand that feeds you.



if you look back at where the Cat's come from, then there is a development in his arc. But it's not within this series. It's within the whole oeuvre [of *Red Dwarf*].

"We're really looking for two things," he continues. "Obviously funny ideas, cool science fiction ideas, then trying to get the guys in situations where character is exposed."

Few sitcoms (or indeed sci-fi shows) are as hungry for high-concept ideas as *Red Dwarf*, and Naylor – who, after series XI and XII, has either written or co-written all 73 episodes of the show – admits he collects them as he goes.

"I'll jot it down in my notebook and keep it there," he explains. "In fact, I got an idea for series XIII last week! You are collecting them all the time, because you always want to avoid that situation of having no ideas and just sitting there [when you write]."

“We’re really looking for two things: funny ideas and cool science fiction ideas”



Perhaps surprisingly, however, he says he's not constantly working his way through other sci-fi on the hunt for ideas.

"I think it's something Terry Pratchett said where he didn't read that many novels in his genre – he sort of ignored them and just wrote what he wanted to write. That's kind of what I do – if you saturate yourself with everything sci-fi and you're too knowledgeable you won't write anything. You just have to go for it."

AND... ACTION!

It's three days later, and we're back in that same Pinewood soundstage – though now it's buzzing with over 200 fans eager to see their first new *Dwarf* in three-and-a-bit years. It's the second recording in the run, and it's a

special thing to be a part of. Yes, there's plenty of laughter – both during the scenes *and* the bits in between when warm-up comedian Ray Peacock keeps everyone cheerful – but also a sense of being part of a privileged club who gets to see new *Dwarf* first. That's possibly why every studio audience in the social media age has been so brilliant at keeping plot details under wraps. There's also a chance for one lucky *Red Dwarf* fan/expert to give a good enough explanation of the concept of "hard light" to win himself an exclusive crew t-shirt (not for eBay!) – and a pitch-perfect Kenneth Williams impression from Chris Barrie.

So when you've got a fanbase who are so knowledgeable about the show, how do you stay on top of the show's near-three decades of lore?

"I have very good people around me going, 'You've already made that joke,'" admits Naylor.

"Really? When?"

"In 'Episode...'"

"Really? I have no recollection."

"No, you did exactly that joke."

"God, that's awful! And in terms of 'that contradicts that', that's possibly why it stays fresh for me, because my memory's so lousy!" ●

Red Dwarf XI airs on Dave from 22 September. The first episode will also be available on UKTV Play from 15 September.

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THE FLASH



BLURRED TIMELINES

THE FLASH IS REWRITING ITS OWN HISTORY. JOSEPH McCABE RACES TO KEEP UP

Second chances are precious things. Rare, fleeting, and almost impossible to create. Unless, of course, you're the Flash. But even a superhero can make mistakes in trying to make a better world...

As *The Flash's* second year drew to a close, Barry Allen had defeated the most powerful foe he'd yet faced, the demonic Zoom. But he paid a huge price for that victory – the death of his father. Just like his mother's death years before, Barry watched helplessly while his dad was murdered by a speedster. This time, however, it was too much for the hero to bear. And so he decided to race back in time to save his mother once and for all, and, in so doing, spared both his parents.

Producer Todd Helbing gives *SFX* a glimpse of how things have changed since we last visited Central City.

"At the end of last season, when Barry went back to save his mother from being killed by Reverse-Flash, that changes his life. It sets him on a new timeline. So when Barry comes back from that, everything is different. He didn't grow up anymore with Joe West and Iris in the house. He never ended up going to STAR Labs. All the people that he ended up having relationships with in seasons one and two are completely different. But, at the same time, he is living this sort of idyllic existence with his real parents, who are now alive."

"At heart," adds Helbing, "Barry's this very optimistic character. And that optimism has been hiding the fact that there's this hollowness inside him. So for the first time in

his life, at least since his mother was killed, he's able to have that hole inside of him filled. It's everything he's ever wanted. But what he'll start to realise is that with every decision he's made, there are consequences."

DIMENSIONS & TIME

Inspired by the DC Comics storyline *Flashpoint* (by writer Geoff Johns), Barry's actions will affect at least one other show in the ever-expanding DC TV Universe.

"*Supergirl's* in another dimension," says Helbing. "And then on *Legends Of Tomorrow*, they're kind of travelling through time on their own. But *Arrow's* in the same timeline, the same era, so it's gonna affect that. There are some big personal changes with some of the characters... *Flashpoint* isn't going to last a →

whole season, but the effects of what Barry did will."

When *Flashpoint* begins, one of those effects is that Joe West's son Wally has become Kid Flash. The yellow-clad speedster, Helbing explains, will differ from Barry in his approach to crimefighting.

"Barry has powers, but there's another Flash out there... Last year, Wally was racing cars. He was speeding into danger. He is a lot more of the egotistical, cocky teenager than Barry ever was. So there's going to be a lot of bravado with him. Like, 'I'm Kid Flash, man! Nothing can stop me!'"

Further complicating Barry's life this year will be not one but two Big Bads: Doctor Alchemy and Savitar.

"Doctor Alchemy, like in the comics, has this thing called the Philosopher's Stone, and it allows him to transmute things. He can create things out of nothing. So he is really creating a lot of problems for the Flash using that thing. Then on top of that we have Savitar. Savitar is the Hindu word for the god of speed. He's like Zoom in terms of his speed. But it's more of a psychological torment for Barry in a lot of ways. Because Savitar is kind of this cult leader. So you'll see how that starts to pull people in and affect him. There are groupies around him. He's totally different than Reverse-Flash and Zoom."

Lending support in the villainy department is the Flash's longtime comic-book foe Mirror Master, played by Grey Damon.

"Mirror Master is awesome," says a smiling Helbing. "I feel like he was really the last big rogue... Well, there's Abra Kadabra, who has



“How often do you get to do a superhero musical? C’mon!”



Zoom: nothing to do with Fat Larry's Band.

some powers that we're trying to figure out how to make look cool. In comic books it's easy, but when you actually have to make it manifest... Even with Mirror Master, it's like, 'How the fuck do you get him in the glass without it looking goofy?' In our version, he's a meta. He doesn't have a gun. You're going to see his origin story. He's this very handsome, egotistical guy who – once he gets these powers – wants to be king of the castle. Mirror Master's the biggest guest villain right now. But I will say we'll do a little Grodd action."

The telepathic gorilla's annual appearance

PRIMER ON MULTIPLE EARTHS

The DC TV Universe has too many heroes for one dimension to hold...

EARTH-ONE

⚡ Home of Barry Allen's Flash, Oliver Queen's Green Arrow, and the late Laurel Lance's Black Canary; as well as Ray Palmer's Atom and his fellow Legends of Tomorrow.



EARTH-TWO

⚡ Earth-Two's Barry Allen has no powers. Here, Earth-One Barry's friends Caitlin Snow and Cisco Ramone have (now deceased) evil metahuman doppelgängers. Also holds Gorilla City.

EARTH-THREE

⚡ The home of Kara Danvers' Supergirl and Clark Kent's Superman.



EARTH UNSPECIFIED

⚡ The home of Jay Garrick's Flash, whose speed was stolen by Earth-Two's Zoom.



on *The Flash* has become a favourite of many fans. Though Helbing admits his story's latest turn, in which he was banished to Earth-Two's super-smart simian sanctuary, presented an enormous challenge. One viewers will see surmounted in a two-part episode...

"It's one of those things where you screw yourself," he laughs. "It's like, 'He lands in Gorilla City!' Then it's 'What are we doing – so the next time we see Grodd we have to do Gorilla City?! We can't afford that!' Yeah, we'll see what happens there."

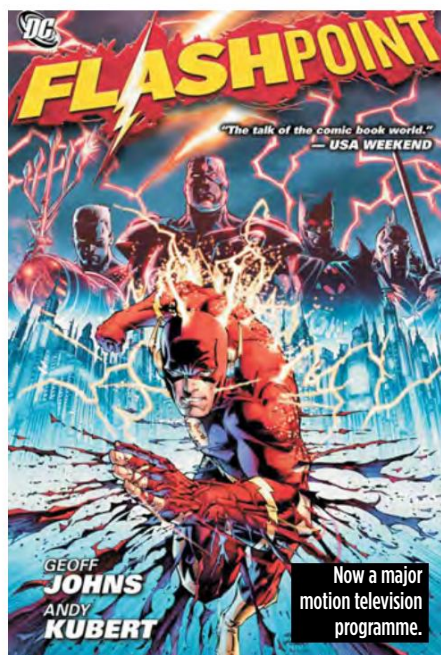
Helbing also indicates that Jay Garrick may be back in town to lend Barry a speedy hand when needed.

"Now that Barry knows the real Jay Garrick, another Flash, is out there, the odds of him using Jay to get some advice now and then will likely increase. It's weird, for sure, that he looks like his dad. But there's no way to get around that. So it's going to be an element that Barry just has to deal with every time he sees him."

ALSO STARRING...

Among this year's new faces will be that of Tom Felton. Best known for playing Draco Malfoy in the *Harry Potter* films, the actor will take on the role of a new regular – Julian Dorn, a CSI at Central City PD who takes a special interest in Barry. Additionally, *The Vampire Diaries'* Susan Walters will appear as Caitlin Snow's mother, Dr Carla Tannhauser, the CEO of her own research company.

But for many the most welcome news is that of a two-part musical in the season's second half, in which *The Flash* will once more cross over with *Supergirl*. Both stars Grant Gustin and Melissa Benoist are veterans of TV's



tune-filled *Glee*. And with at least one new song expected per show, Helbing says it's a project that's especially near and dear to the heart of Greg Berlanti, the creator/executive producer of all the DC TV Universe shows.

"I don't know if this is true, but somebody told me that with the musical episode on *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* they planned for six months or something. So yeah, we're definitely already working on it. This is obviously very close to Greg. It's his baby. So I know he got the idea in his head months before he even told anybody. Every day it's getting clearer what he wants to do. I'm excited. How often do you get to do a superhero musical? C'mon!"

With singing superheroes on the horizon and a younger speedster in Central City, Helbing assures us that *The Flash's* third year will be lighter in tone than its often dark second season.

"It got pretty grim last season. That was one of those things where it was like, 'This is gonna get darker and darker and darker. We gotta reset that.' So that was a conscious thing that we all knew we had to do. I would say this season is more akin to the first season than the last five or six episodes of *Zoom* last year."

According to the producer, it's all about returning to what *The Flash* does best...

"I worked on *Spartacus* for four years, and that was a really dark show. To be able to write a show where at the end of every episode you feel good, and you see somebody enjoying their powers and what it means to be a hero... Everything is so dark in our world. To be able to do something light is really nice." ●

The Flash is on Sky 1 in the UK and The CW in the US from October.



RUNNING MAN

Grant Gustin on *Flashpoint's* starting point...

How closely does *Flashpoint* adhere to the original comic-book version?

⚡ We're not directly replacing anybody in order to do the exact storyline from the animated or comics version, but they do a good job of nodding to previous *Flashpoint* stories in this version. But it is completely its own thing. Because we've set up our own world on the show with Cisco and Caitlin and Joe. Those are our characters, for the most part, so everything has to be changed in its own way.

How does the new timeline affect Barry?

⚡ Barry is the only one who knows the timeline's different after he changes it. But his memories are being replaced with new memories. When Barry starts to realise that, that's not okay with him. He has some regrets. So he's going to try to put things back to the way they were. But that's probably gonna be impossible. And he's going to get some advice from another speedster to let things be from now on. Like, "If you keep doing this, the world will implode." So he's got to stop.

How do you feel about Barry's decision to save his mother?

⚡ It was a selfish decision. But I don't think he knew he was going to make it till the moment that he made it. When he's sitting there with Iris and she says what he's always wanted to hear and he still feels empty inside, that's the moment [he thinks], "I have to at least try out this other life" – as fucked up as that is. And he just does it.



BURTON'S — OLD — PECULIAR

Out come the freaks...
TIM BURTON welcomes Nick
Setchfield to *Miss Peregrine's
Home For Peculiar Children*



Tim Burton has just caught scent of the weird. “What’s Slender Man?” he asks, his gaze pinned on *SFX*. There’s a genuine and urgent curiosity in his eyes. We’ve been discussing the Hollowgasts, the skinny monstrosities that menace the heroes of his latest film, *Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children*. There’s a touch of Slender Man there, we reckon, a trace of the lean, besuited urban myth that haunts the twilight corners of the internet. Burton’s never heard of this meme from hell. But he pounces upon the name as soon as it leaves our lips.

“A tall man, really?” he nods, savouring our explanation, clearly thrilled to discover an unexplored sidestreet in Freakyville. “Well, that makes sense. Usually in your dreams

they’re not simply creatures going ‘Raargh, raargh!’ It’s something slightly more folk tale, more fairytale. You hear of things in different cultures that sound slightly more humanised.

“I just didn’t want it to be a creature,” he continues. “It was more like a weird person. That’s why they’re wearing clothes. I was trying to go for a slightly more child’s nightmare kind of thing.”

This is the Tim Burton we expected to meet – but he’s also not quite the Tim Burton you imagine. His cartoon self precedes him: Hollywood’s misfit king, the pale, shock-haired visionary with a carnival funhouse attic where his skull should be. He still doesn’t seem to be on speaking terms with sunlight – today he’s dressed in his trademark black – but there’s an energy: a mischief, a crackle, an easy laugh that belies his rep as a floaty goth wraith. He runs into the room, shakes hands enthusiastically. No fewer than three pens are jammed into his jacket pocket, as if arming him against a →



Who *doesn't* own a doll's head on a crab wielding a knife, quite frankly?

“You can have success, you can have kids, but there’s that dark pit inside that just stays with you”



Someone might need to hire a new gardener...

feverish urge to sketch, to scribble, to nail down his imagination. Perhaps he'll draw us an impromptu Slender Man...

Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children feels built for Burton's brand. Based on the 2011 novel by Ransom Riggs, it's the tale of a boy, Jake (Asa Butterfield), who discovers a strange mansion on a deserted island off the Welsh coast. The house is filled with extraordinary, superpowered orphans, including Emma (Ella Purnell), a girl with the power to control air. They're under the tutelage of the sternly mysterious Miss Peregrine (Eva Green), a shapeshifter who can rewind and relive time, protecting her charges from the dark forces determined to destroy them. "She's Scary Poppins!" laughs Burton.

Riggs wrote the book after finding a cache of mournfully creepy old photographs, fashioning a story around the nameless children in the pictures.

"I wasn't aware of the book, but when I was sent it I really liked what Ransom did," says Burton. "I collect photographs. And a certain kind of photograph tells you something but doesn't tell you everything. The way he concocted the story around this collection was really beautiful, so poetic and mysterious. As soon as I saw it I was drawn to it. And also the character of Jake. Once you have those feelings as a child of not feeling like you fit in, or you feel crazy by the time you're a teenager...

"He's not even that different. He's just a kid, you know. He's awkward, and by that age I felt the same way. You just don't feel a part of your world. You feel like you're crazy. There's just an awkwardness, and that spoke to me very, very simply and clearly."

GLORIOUS LONERS

Burton smiles as he remembers his first meeting with the film's young star. "I was looking at him, going, 'You're the kid from *Hugo*? Jesus Christ! He's like six feet tall, right? Film's a visual medium so all I had to do was look at him. He's got this sense of intelligence and emotion but also [a sense of] awkwardness and not fitting in. He's not this big action movie thing. It was important to me that he was just a person. I don't think I was unique to those feelings. I've known a lot of people that feel that way. He was somebody that just visually embodied that type of person."

The outsider's a throughline in Burton's career. From *Edward Scissorhands* to *Ed Wood*, *Bruce Wayne* to *Selina Kyle*, his heroes are the beautiful freaks, the glorious loners, the souls in the margins. You don't need a psychology degree to track this back to Burton's sense of inner exile growing up in suburban Burbank. What's genuinely surprising is that it still resonates so profoundly with him.

"It's probably worse now than ever before," Burton tells *SFX*.

"You go through waves of it. Once you feel those things, unfortunately, it doesn't leave you. You can have success, you can have kids, but there's that dark pit inside that just stays with you. It's not like I want to do the same thing. I don't think, 'Oh, I want to make another weird, lonely

person story.' It just sort of happens. In this particular case I felt connected to that character – not just Jake but the others, and Miss Peregrine, and the world, and the foundation that whether it's past, present or whatever, you don't fit into anything."

It's worse now than ever before?

"I can't really go into those reasons but you know you just go through times in your life when it's kind of wave-like. It feels like seasonal change. You get better, you get worse, you get better, you get worse." He gives a goofily self-deprecating laugh. "Hopefully it's not one of those charts that keeps going down! Like one of those economic charts..."

Burton found a kindred outsider spirit in the movie's screenwriter, Jane Goldman (*Stardust*, *Kick-Ass*, *Kingsman: The Secret Service*). "There's a connection. You can recognise another peculiar person. She understands that. All us peculiar people can spot each other, without even talking about it. That's why I love her. She's very talented. And you know when somebody knows these feelings."

He was also happy to reunite with Eva Green after working with her on 2012's *Dark Shadows*. There's something deeply Burtonesque in her DNA, isn't there? Something moonlit and gothic and misplaced in time?

"I love her because she's perfect for me," Burton agrees. "She had all the elements. I guess she's described as older in the book but I wasn't looking at it from that perspective.

I was looking at it from 'Who's got that sense of mystery? Who's got that sense of power? Who's got that mixture of weirdness and connection and humour and strength? And also looks like they could turn into a bird?"

"And by the way, yes, I think she actually can [laughs]! She is that type of person. I love her ideas. I remember when I first met her... I've had it a couple of times in my life, a certain psychic connection ➔

Just watch out that she doesn't fly away.

Treasures from the World of Film & Television



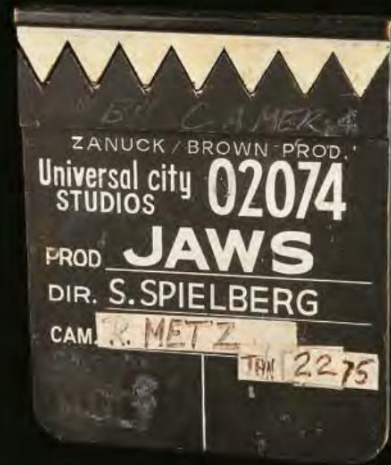
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that I can't even explain. I just find her quite powerful. A powerful person, a powerful actress. In this day and age when everybody knows everything about everybody she's got that old movie star sense of mystery about her, which I thank god for, and I'm impressed with. It's a rarity."

HOME SWEET HOME

There's another star of the movie. This one's masonry and timber, not flesh and blood. It's the title star, Miss Peregrine's home itself, and, remarkably, it's a real building, not some soundstage confection.

"That's what I loved about it," Burton says. "I looked in England. I've worked in England quite a bit and I've looked at lots of houses over the years. This one ended up being in Belgium. You see a lot of things that look like institutions or castles but this one needed to feel like a strange home. When I saw it I felt like well, it's not overly dark and gothic, but it has a funny quality to it. It's like casting an actor."

"I just felt, especially working with kids, to not over rely on effects, to do as much as you could real and have a real place, to not make it so effects heavy and do it a little bit more intimate – real sets, locations. It just felt more appropriate."

For all the kids' unearthly powers, don't look for a movie that chases the current superhero boom.

"Look, I did *Batman*," Burton says. "[Those movies are] very popular but what I liked about this is it's not so much about superpowers. You might consider them more afflictions, to be honest. If anyone's expecting *X-Men Jnr* they may want to wait. I'm sure it's coming to a theatre near you soon!"

And does Burton have a refuge, a retreat? His own Bat-Cave or Scissorhands castle? His own home for peculiar children?

The patron saint of outcasts laughs again. "I think it might be more of a home for peculiar old people!"

Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children opens on 30 September.

© JOHN RUSSO

"He's out of his depth"

Asa Butterfield is Jake

What was it about Jacob that leapt off the page for you?

☞ Jacob is the normal one in this wacky world. He's the pillar of normality when everything else is chaotic. He's the one that the audience are going to relate to, the one they're going to sympathise with, because he's taken out of his comfort zone and thrown into this totally alien world. He's out of his depth and that's something we can all relate to.

Do you think actors should be outsiders?

☞ I think the best actors are outsiders, definitely. You have to be able to empathise totally with other people, other characters. If you can't do that then you can't totally put yourself in their shoes, and you can't feel what it would be like to be them. Being an outsider makes you able to appreciate and acknowledge when other people are outsiders. It just makes it so much easier to get into their head, figure them out.

Were you jealous of anyone else's powers?

☞ The birds, the Ymbrynes, they can sort of manipulate time. And I thought oh, that's unfair, that's just cheating, you can just beat anyone! So that would probably be the coolest power to have.

"Shes a very cool and eccentric character"

Eva Green is Miss Peregrine

How did Tim sell this to you?

☞ He just said, "Read this book and tell me what you think. And if you like it, maybe you could be in it." I could play anything for Tim – I could play a tree, a broom, anything [laughs]. It's a bird in this movie. It was such a gorgeous story, and a very cool and eccentric character.

How close is the film to the book?

☞ It's a bit different, I would say. The old photographs in the book are absolutely beautiful – spooky, and haunting. You're like, "Oh my god, of course Tim is going to direct it." Only Tim could direct this, actually. He always brings emotion and poetry, and it's always very delicate. It is unique. He has such a great vision.

This isn't a typical superhero movie, is it?

☞ I think in the outside world these abilities would be seen as a handicap and these children would be persecuted because of that. But on this island, they're kind of celebrated for being so unique, and the message in the film, for children as well as adults, it's just, "Be yourself, no matter how strange you are." That's what Tim does best. I feel like he understands the hearts of outcasts, and he celebrates them. It's beautiful.

"I wanted to play the badass!"

Ella Purnell is Emma

Film Emma's very different from book Emma...

☞ That was the first thing I noticed. I expected to be this fiery, badass character and then I read the script and she was the total polar opposite. I was like oh man, I wanted to play the badass! But you know what, this is Tim Burton and Jane Goldman. Just trust them. They're going to do an incredible job and all you've got to do is create a character that doesn't exist already, which is what you do for a living anyway.

Do you know why they changed her powers?

☞ From talking to Jane Goldman about it, it fits in more with Hollywood. If you have a fiery badass character she does tend to dominate. But the film's a celebration of individuality and more importantly it's about Asa, and how Jake goes on this emotional journey. At first I didn't agree with it because I wanted to be this cool girl who played with fire. But it does make much better sense. It's much more romantic, it makes their moments together much more tender and sweet. And just that image of her being up in the sky is actually more Tim Burton than a girl with flames coming from her hand.



Left to right: Asa
Butterfield, Eva
Green, Ella Purnell.

DAVID MAZOUZ

Gotham's young star is still in the shadow of the Bat...

Words by Tara Bennett // Photography by Maarten de Boer

You might imagine that given the chance of playing the young Bruce Wayne – years before he becomes Batman, in a television series focused on the cool bad guys – most actors would see it as a booby prize. Who wants to play out the Dark Knight's skinny, brooding teen phase? Well, in the hands of David Mazouz, that incarnation of Bruce Wayne has more than held his own as an evolving, driven, genuine player in the town that his future caped self will wrestle into submission. The definition of an old soul in a young body, Mazouz brings gravitas to his interpretation of Bruce and proves time and again that he can more than hold his own in scenes with actors twice his age. As the third season of *Gotham* drops, he tells *SFX* where the Wayne boy is heading next...

Pacing Bruce's path to Batman is a tightrope. Do you think he moved forward enough in season two?

☉ Honestly, I think for most of season one, Bruce was grieving and he couldn't do a lot. He couldn't make his evolution to Batman because it was too early. In season two, he made some big steps toward that goal. In season three, because those steps were so big in season two, there's going to need to be a step back. Bruce realises if he continues on the path that he's going on, he's putting people that he cares about, and loves, in danger. He needs to figure out what his purpose is in Gotham, and what he really wants to do in the end. He's going to do a lot of figuring himself out, but that doesn't mean he will be any less involved than in season two.

What's he getting into this season?

☉ Bruce is going to be taking on some major battles in season three. There are going to be some major opponents that he will take on all on his own. And you will see him develop his playboy persona for the public so he can do even deeper detective work in season three.

What's getting you most excited when you open a script?

☉ You know, there are so many distinguishing qualities that we know about Batman. For example, he doesn't kill anybody. We saw the origins of that belief and philosophy in season two when he has a gun up to the man who ruined his life, otherwise known as "Matches" Malone, and he doesn't pull the trigger. In that moment, he realises nobody is beyond redemption and everybody can be saved. Another

example is Batman is known to be able to withstand tremendous amounts of pain. In the very next episode, Bruce was getting totally beat up but said, "This guy is not going to break me. I know who I am and I'm going to stand for what I believe in." He's learning what Batman needs to learn and I think what the writers are doing is so brilliant and I'm so excited to see what else they have in store.

Where are Alfred and Bruce in their relationship this season?

☉ First of all, Sean Pertwee is my favourite guy ever. I love hanging out with him. Working with him, he's amazing. Besides being the nicest guy you will ever meet and being so funny, he's an incredible actor that I learn so much from every day. So bringing their relationship to life is amazing. In the comic books before *Gotham* and the movies, the relationship between Bruce and Alfred is that Bruce is the boss and Alfred is the servant. But that dynamic is completely changed in *Gotham*. It's more of a partnership. There's no one over the other. Alfred's very first line in the show was "Get your bloody ass down from there Master Bruce!" when I'm up on the roof. A lot of fans were like, "Whoa, Alfred can't talk to Bruce like that" but he can in *Gotham*. I was at a convention once and a wonderful artist drew Batman in shadow and Bruce and Alfred in the foreground. I asked what inspired that and he said it seems like in *Gotham* it's not just Bruce becoming Batman, but Bruce and Alfred as a team. It's really what it's about and I love bringing that to life.

When you were cast, was there a go-to Batman comic or book that really brought you into the mythology?

☉ When I first got the role, I was guest-starring on a TV series in Georgia and my studio teacher gave me this *Batman Encyclopedia*. It covered everything! I read the entire thing twice. I knew every single weapon and it was my bible for a really long time.

There's confirmation that you're doing dual roles this season. What can you say about that turn of events?

☉ In the trailer, you saw somebody – played by me – in a long wig that came out of Hugo Strange's Freak Club. I can't say who exactly, or what he is, but I can say he's in season three and it's a blast to play him. I'm so excited for the audience to see him. I really love what we've done with the character and it's so much fun playing two characters. ●

Gotham returns to Fox in the US on 19 September. The show airs on Channel 5 in the UK.

Biodata

Occupation

→ Actor

Born

→ 19 February 2001

From

→ Los Angeles, California

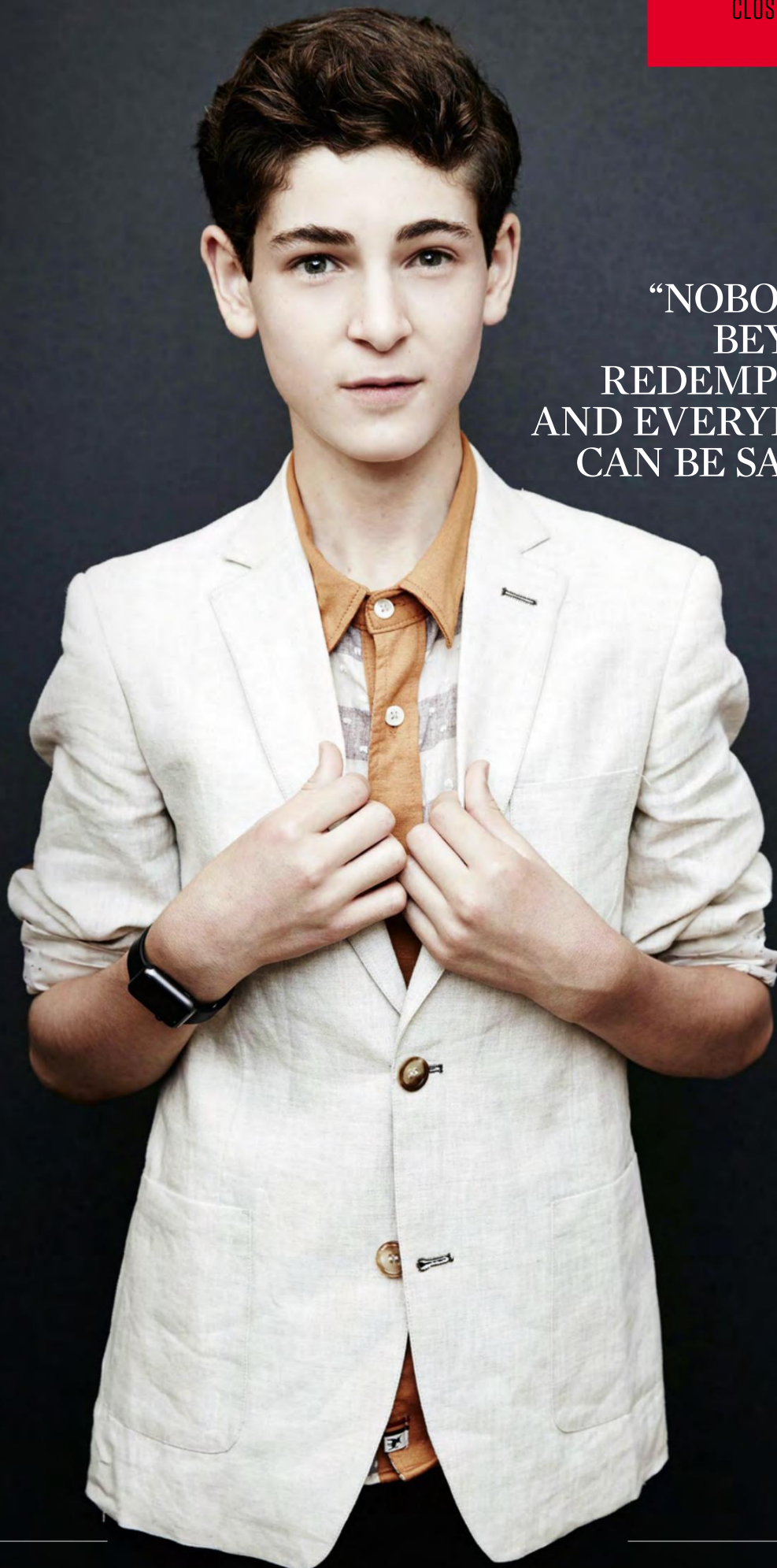
Greatest Hits

→ *The Games Maker*, *The Darkness*, *Incarnate*, *Touch*

Random Fact

→ Mazouz plays guitar because of his *Touch* co-star Kiefer Sutherland, who gifted him an axe for his 11th birthday.

“NOBODY IS
BEYOND
REDEMPTION
AND EVERYBODY
CAN BE SAVED”





GREEN DAYS

Feeling Hungry?
Jamie Graham
bites into a fresh
new take on the
zombie movie in
**THE GIRL WITH
ALL THE GIFTS**



Set 10 years in the future, *The Girl With All The Gifts* brings us a Britain – and, we can only presume, a world – reclaimed by nature. The towering structures of now-desolate cities are strangled by rampant, strangely sentient flora, and few humans remain.

A rebooted and retitled *The Day Of The Triffids*, perhaps? Most certainly not, though Colm McCarthy's unexpectedly moving, elegant, minimalist feature and the bestselling 2014 novel by Mike Carey that it's based on owe undoubted debts. No, *The Girl With All The Gifts* is as much a striking new take on the zombie subgenre as anything else, for flesh-chomping "Hungries" roam these eerie landscapes. They are a means to an end: by turning people into Hungries they will terminate the human race, and then they themselves will burst into plant life upon hitting critical mass.

"Although this film's got zombies in it, it's not really a zombie film in the classical way," explains McCarthy. "I love George A Romero's films. I grew up on those films, and there's definitely an element to this which is a celebration of that. At the same time, it's kind of from a different world, and it's a personal story first and foremost. It's a story about a human being in that world. Zombies are like vampires or werewolves – they're a myth, and you can use them to tell whatever story you want to tell. And I think the story we really wanted to tell was about this little girl and her journey to empowerment."

BUNKER MENTALITY

The action begins underground, in a bunker that houses, among others, scientist Dr Caroline Caldwell (Glenn Close), military man Sgt Eddie Parks (Paddy Considine) and

Glenn Close is
worried scientist Dr
Caroline Caldwell.



schoolteacher Helen Justineau (Gemma Arterton). Each day 20 or so children are removed from their cells, muzzled, strapped into wheelchairs, and rolled into a bare room to be taught by Helen. Among their number is Melanie (newcomer Sennia Nanua), with whom Helen shares a close bond, though Parks is at pains to remind this optimistic kind-hearted tutor that Melanie will bite her face off if she gets too close. Half human, half zombie, she's a next-gen Hungry who was just a baby when she was discovered beside her mother's empty corpse having eaten her way out.

"The part of Melanie was written by Mike out of love for his own daughter," McCarthy tells *SFX*. "And that was the thing that I hooked onto because I've got a daughter. The relationship between Justineau and Melanie is very important."

“Finding an actor to carry the entire film was always going to be challenging”

Casting Arterton was a no-brainer – McCarthy points to her fearless work in hard-hitting indie *The Disappearance Of Alice Creed* and stresses that she is a "special, naturalistic actor". For her part, Arterton couldn't say yes fast enough, delighted to be offered a different kind of role to those that normally land in her inbox. She also warmed to the "Pandora's Box theme" of nature repaying the many evils that have been forced upon her.

Finding Melanie, however, was a headache.

"Finding an actor to carry an entire film, as a character who's supposed to be 10 years old, was always going to be the most challenging," McCarthy says. "We met 500 little girls for that part. We went to schools, drama groups. We very deliberately cast the net away from middle-class areas, because we knew we didn't want a precocious, posh kid in this part."

Nanua, who was found in Nottingham at the Television Workshop, was literally the last girl to audition. "It sounds kind of impossibly romantic, but we'd actually moved on to the stage of having a shortlist of about half a dozen girls. We were doing final readings with Gemma. But I went to Nottingham, and Sennia was the very last one that day."

"I heard about the film and thought, 'It's just



"We've never seen a tree
quite like this before!"



Schoolteacher Helen
(Gemma Arterton) forms
a bond with "the Girl".

a film, I'll audition for it," says Nanua. "Then I had to audition for it again. And then I auditioned again, in London. I met the producer and director properly. And then I went back and auditioned again and did a reading with Gemma, which was really nice, because I really got to know her then. And I think that was the last audition I did." She smiles shyly. "They rang up my mum and said I had the part. My mum was bursting into tears: 'Oh my god, Sennia – you've got the part!'"

JOINING FORCES

Naturally, it was important that Arterton and Nanua shared a bond on set, between takes, for it is their characters' relationship that is the heart of the film.

"We've got to kind of fall in love with each other," nods Arterton. "Colm prepped her. He said, 'When Gemma arrives on set' – because I was off the first week – 'you've got to get it in your head that this is the love of your life. You idolise her.' So I came on set, and she's like, 'GEMMA! YOU'RE HERE!' She's cool. But yeah, we are fond of each other. I said to her, 'Let's go to Disneyland together when we finish the film. You can come and stay with me.' She's never left the country. Doing this film was the first time she's left Nottingham. But she has an aura about her. She's just got something cooler about her than other kids. She's sharp."

But it's not just the child's-eye viewpoint and the strong emotional undertow that separate *The Girl With All The Gifts* from the zombie pack. Here, any violence

– yes, even violence against Hungries – comes with real impact ("Shooting a machine gun might look 'cool', but I wanted it to be that shooting a Hungry is like putting an animal down," says Arterton. "How do you deal with having to become a killer?"), while the zombie/vegetation peril offers a whole new enemy. An enemy, it should be noted, that is nowhere near as fantastical as you might think.

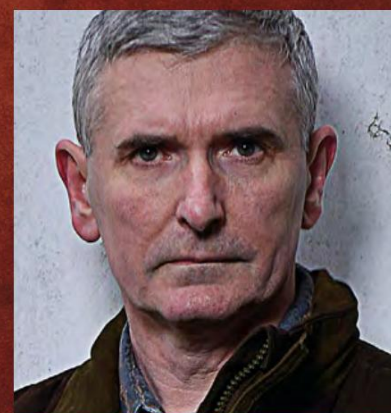
"Quite early on, we were trying to come up with a reason behind the existence of the Hungries in the film," muses McCarthy. "Mike hit upon the idea of using *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*. We'd all watched the David Attenborough documentary *The Secret Life Of Plants*, and as soon as he mentioned it, we all got really excited."

For those who haven't seen *The Secret Life Of Plants*, *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis* is a parasite that attacks ants in the Amazon rainforest. Its spores fall onto the forest floor, the ants crawl over them, the spores attach themselves to the ant's body, and then the fungal mycelia grow up through the carapace of the ant and into its nervous system.

Essentially hijacked, the ant is forced to climb up a tree and hang from the highest leaf while the fungus eats it from the inside out and then explodes out of its body. The spores spread for miles, and the whole process starts over again.

McCarthy smiles. "Ants being mind-controlled by a fungus is one of those things that make you realise that nature can be completely insane beyond our imagination." ●

The Girl With All The Gifts is out on
23 September and reviewed on p97.



RIPPED FROM THE PAGES

Mike Carey on adapting
his own book for the
silver screen

→ "I was in the glorious position," Mike Carey tells *SFX*, "of writing the novel and the screenplay side by side. So I was living in that story world and I was making some choices for the screenplay and some different choices for the novel."

Writing the book and the screenplay simultaneously "helped in terms of not being precious about what stayed [in the film]... It is really hard if you've realised the story in one form to look at it and think, 'Well, that's unnecessary,' or 'There's a better way of doing that,' because that's how you did it. But because both were in flux at the same time I think that did make a difference and made it much easier."

The Girl With All the Gifts began life as a short story. "It was present tense narrative, a young child as the protagonist, it was post-apocalyptic, it was doing a lot of things that I hadn't done before. But it felt right. I wrote the short story and I thought, 'I like this one, I'm going to like this voice, I want to see where it goes.'" But despite loving the book – and film that it's become – he has no plans for a sequel. "I think a straight sequel to *Girl* would be difficult to do because the world has changed so much at the end of the story that the sequel would have nothing in common, really, with the first book."

For the time being he's just enjoying his experience with *Girl*. "I never imagined I'd see a novel of mine with 'Soon to be a major motion picture' on the cover... it's a bit intoxicating!" **Abigail Chandler**



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THE QUICK — AND — THE DEAD

The classic AI tale heads to TV. Stephen Armstrong takes a trip to **WESTWORLD**, where nothing can possibly go wrong...



In its restless search for

stories to feed the big and small screen's hungry maw, Hollywood has plundered everything from folk tales to videogames, taking in comics, novels and old TV or movie ideas ripe for a reboot. Curiously, however, there's one set of ideas that seem almost untouchable – the rich seam of pre-*Star Wars* dystopian 1970s sci-fi movies like *Logan's Run*, *Death Race 2000*, *Soylent Green* and *Westworld*.

Offering a confused and terrifying version of imminent doom, where population growth, violent sports and Artificial Intelligence

threaten struggling everyday citizens, these future shocks lacked George Lucas's moral clarity and heroic quests. Curiously, just as JJ Abrams picked up the *Star Wars* stories he's also ventured into these murkier waters, producing HBO's TV reversioning of 1973 sci-fi disaster movie *Westworld*.

It's an impressive project, starring Evan Rachel Wood, Thandie Newton, Anthony Hopkins, Ed Harris and James Marsden, with a budget to match the original movies. In many ways, it vastly outclasses its ageing parent.

Westworld the movie was written and directed by *Jurassic Park* author Michael Crichton and follows the same basic storyline

as his dinosaur romp – a futuristic theme park based on ideas the scientists don't completely understand goes haywire, forcing the staff into a locked down control room while guests struggle to escape death. In *Westworld*, the theme parks feature AI robots role playing as cowboys, Romans and knights in armour. Yul Brynner is *Westworld's* T-Rex – a black clad gunslinger (a direct copy of Brynner's *Magnificent Seven* badass Chris Adams) who picks fights with holiday makers and always loses... until, inevitably, the park crashes and the slaughter begins.

In rebooting the idea, *Westworld's* husband and wife executive producer/writing team →



Anthony Hopkins plays Dr Robert Ford, creative director of Westworld.

Lisa Joy and Jonathan Nolan decided to prune all but the old West, for very particular reasons.

"I did see the film when I was a kid and found it profoundly terrifying," Nolan tells *SFX*. "The original film was fantastic but it barely has opportunity to explore all the questions that Crichton throws into it. JJ Abrams, who I've been collaborating with going on six years now, sat down with Michael Crichton 20 years ago to talk about remaking the film, but they couldn't crack it. Two decades later, it occurs to JJ that it's not a movie, it's a series. You take the narrative and you invert it, and you make it about the hosts. Instead of concentrating – as so much film and TV has done – on what do we think of artificial intelligence, the question in the series becomes; what do they think of us? What will they make of us? That was a fantastic jumping-off point to re-energise all the questions from the original."

BAD ROBOTS?

The first episode starts with the hosts – Nolan and Joy's word for the AI robots. We see them live their frontier life loops, repeating pre-programmed storylines with a touching innocence – inhaling the joy of life, all unaware that life is not for them. Indeed, the series acts almost as critique of the movie – in 1973 it was entirely acceptable that people would want to spend their holidays killing and screwing. When the machines fight back, they are the baddies.

“We explore love but also the basest part of human nature”



Thandie Newton and Rodrigo Santoro.

As the AIs gradually wake up in the TV version – as understanding and memory drips slowly into their previously pre-defined brains – the first thing they feel is horror and despair. "My character has effectively been raped every day," Evan Rachel Wood points out. "If a girl has been going through that for 30 years, can you imagine if she woke up one day?"

In that sense, *Westworld* is as interested in deconstructing the idea of the Western, exploring the darkest side of human nature and unpicking power dynamics, as it is in worrying about the Singularity.

"When I used to watch Westerns, I could admire the craft but I never really loved them, they never spoke to me," says Joy. "Maybe because I'm first generation American and I'm a woman, I just didn't see myself reflected in those stories. Here was a chance to take this pluralistic approach to who owned the West. It wasn't just that stalwart, male hero. And then, the behaviour of the human guests adds a whole other level of scrutiny and philosophy. It's a Rashomon effect mirror that we use to analyse ourselves from the point of view of the other. That's the kind of playground that I find just delicious."

The duo's most significant switch is the black-clad gunslinger. Played by Ed Harris, he's revealed to be a guest – a human, who's been coming to the park for years, becoming crueler

and more savage each time. His violent rape and murder of Wood's Dolores – repeated time and again – proves particularly disconcerting.

INNER DEMONS

"When he first went to the park he wasn't the man in black," Harris explains. "This is something he's developed over the years. I think he realised, coming to this place where you're free to exorcise whatever demons you have in you, that he had this side of him that he'd repressed most of his life. Suddenly he realises, 'This is a real part of me.'"

Joy is ready for the controversy already bubbling up after extras were made to sign a consent form saying they agreed to take part in "graphic sexual simulations". "We explore

paternal love, romantic love but also the basest part of human nature," says Joy. "That includes violence and sexual violence, which have sadly been a fact since the beginning of human history. So when we were tackling the project about a park in which the premise is 'you can do whatever you want and explore whatever desire you have with impunity and without consequence', it seemed like it was an issue that we had to address. It's extraordinarily disturbing and horrifying and we wanted to ensure the show is not about the

fetishisation of those acts. It is about exploring the crime and establishing the crime, and the torment of the characters hopefully with dignity and depth."

When he's not shooting and abusing, Harris is also on a mission – he believes there's a game behind the park's façade that only the most experienced visitors can find and play. "Crichton makes the film in '73, and the only videogame that exists at that point is *Pong* but it's so much about gaming," argues Nolan. "It's easy to recognise that it's a roleplaying game. We had a demo of the Valve 5 last year at HBO and we were completely blown away. As a kid, I went to the Trocadero in London and they had the early primitive headsets that made you feel sick. Now one of the things that first struck us was that our daughter will probably spend a significant portion of her life in virtual reality. You turn off *Grand Theft Auto* and all the pedestrians, hookers and bank robbers disappear – but you don't feel like you've just extinguished all those lives. As we get closer to AI and VR in our simulations, we will run headlong at some point into this question, and it's a difficult one. We'll have to wonder – what will they do when the game is switched off? What's the morality of killing them? We don't have the answers – but they're interesting questions, don't you think?" ●

Westworld is on Sky Atlantic from October.

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PROP CULTURE

Gaze upon these objects of geek desire as Nick Setchfield enters the **PROP STORE** vault...

We still find treasures," says Stephen Lane, founder and CEO of movie collectable specialists Prop Store. "I'm all about the curation and preservation of these things.

They're important pieces of cinematic history."

Ahead of a live auction this September, *SFX* has been invited to explore the company's hoard of props, costumes and memorabilia. Imagine the warehouse at the end of *Raiders*, relocated to the Hertfordshire countryside and crammed with the kind of mythic artefacts that make geeks combust on sight. Look, there's an Angel from the Ark itself, the original model miniature that swirled around Indiana Jones...

Founded in 1998, Prop Store sources items from collectors, the public, ex-crew members – and, increasingly, the studios themselves.

"It's taking fandom one step further from buying merchandise, or getting an autograph," says Lane, who talks us through some of the more lustworthy items in the auction. "You're directly connected to the production. We advise people to buy from the heart. Buy something you love, that means something to you."

And if your wallet shivers at the prices, you can simply sit back and swoon...

RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH'S JURASSIC PARK SCRIPT

JURASSIC PARK

LOW ESTIMATE **£4,000** HIGH ESTIMATE **£6,000**

→ "This is from Sir Richard Attenborough's estate sale... He's made his annotations and notes – he's circled all the pages he was going to be seen in. You can see him reworking the dialogue himself, working out how he's going to phrase it within the delivery. It's so much fun to read that kind of thing – it gives you an insight that you normally wouldn't be privy to."

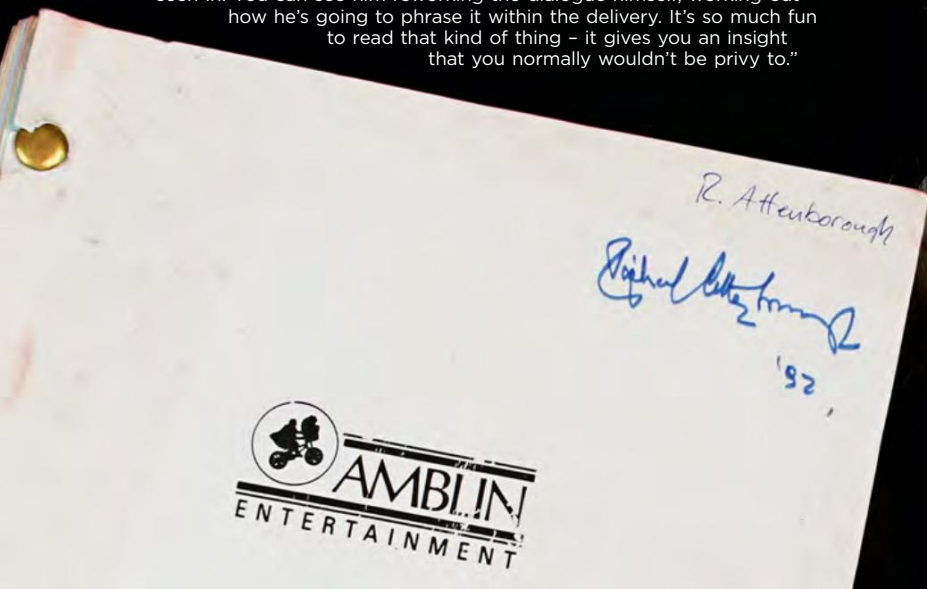


GIZMO STAND-IN

GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH

LOW ESTIMATE **£4,000** HIGH ESTIMATE **£6,000**

→ "*Gremlins* was pre-CGI so Gizmo, for the majority of the film, was puppeteered. This is the fella who would be in shot while they were setting up the camera and the lighting. On the back of his head is a handle, so that they could position him on set while they were preparing for the puppet to come in. It's slightly cruder than the finished article but still just as cute."





CAPTAIN AMERICA'S SHIELD

CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER

LOW ESTIMATE £8,000 HIGH ESTIMATE £10,000

→ "It's a rubberised stunt shield, used when there's a concern that an actor could get injured or the hero prop might get damaged. The hero versions were made of spun aluminium. Marvel items are very hard to come by because they don't release that many. They've decided to hold on to a majority of their assets, because they have a lot of crossover with their properties. There might be flashback sequences in future films!"

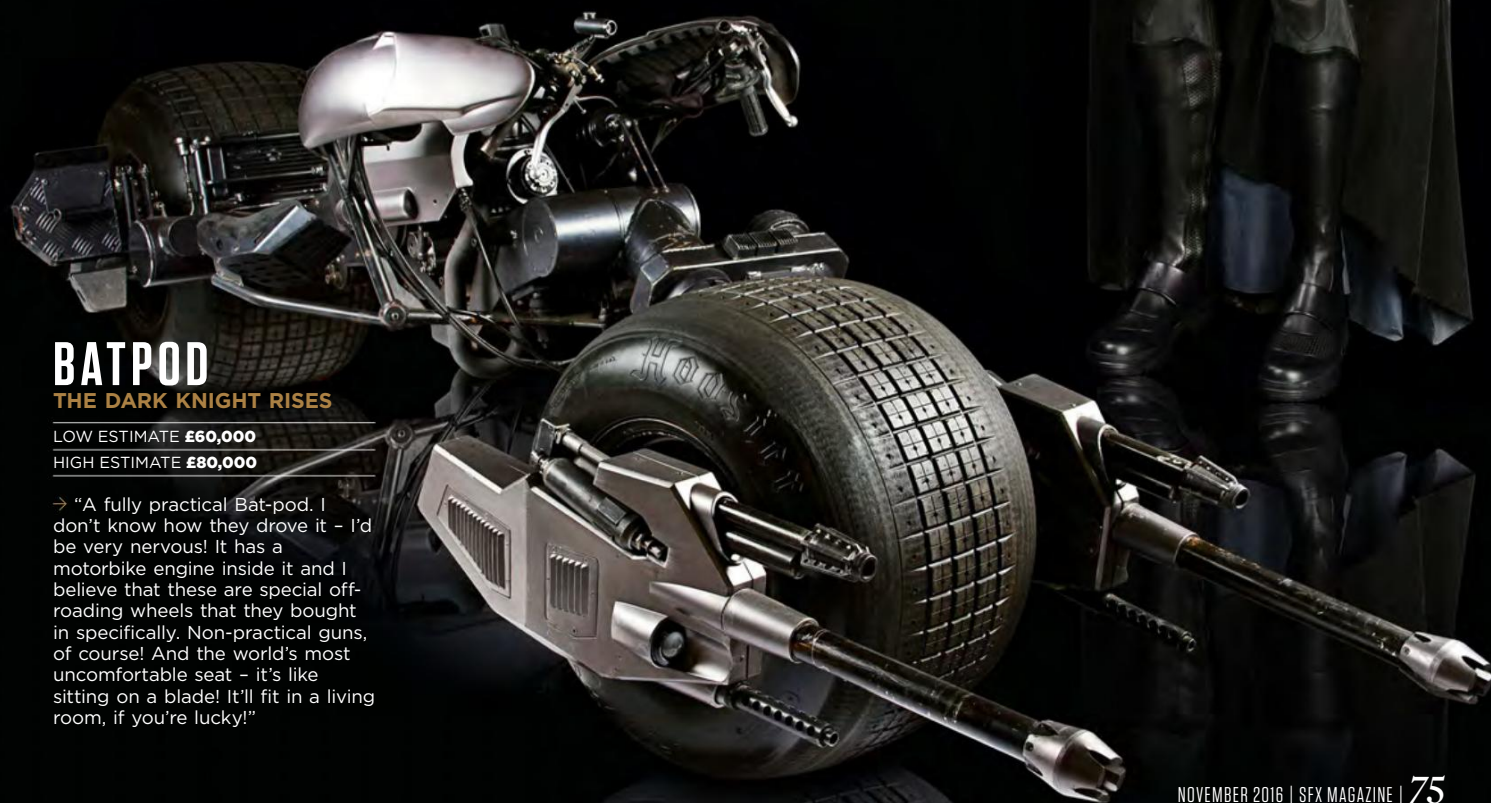
BATSUIT

BATMAN BEGINS

LOW ESTIMATE £30,000

HIGH ESTIMATE £40,000

→ "You've got to be fit to get into this. You've got to be Batman! My recommendation would be to resist the urge to try it on. We're all about the preservation of these items so we like to think people aren't going to use it as a fancy dress costume – although I once had a guy buy Mike Myers' original Austin Powers costume to wear at a party the next week!"



BATPOD

THE DARK KNIGHT RISES

LOW ESTIMATE £60,000

HIGH ESTIMATE £80,000

→ "A fully practical Bat-pod. I don't know how they drove it – I'd be very nervous! It has a motorbike engine inside it and I believe that these are special off-roading wheels that they bought in specifically. Non-practical guns, of course! And the world's most uncomfortable seat – it's like sitting on a blade! It'll fit in a living room, if you're lucky!"

MULDER AND SCULLY'S BADGES

THE X-FILES

LOW ESTIMATE £3,000 APIECE HIGH ESTIMATE £5,000 APIECE

→ "Considering how small these are they get a huge amount of attention! The original signatures are still there, just very, very faint now. Over time you get degradation from the breakdown of the inks, but thankfully the impressions are still there, so you can still see them. These are real photos they had taken during the production - you can see the Mulder photo doesn't quite fit!"



RAMIREZ'S KATANA

HIGHLANDER

LOW ESTIMATE £10,000 HIGH ESTIMATE £14,000

→ "One of Sean Connery's swords, one of two, possibly three, still in existence today. So much detail, from an era when you only really saw something on the big screen. If you tried to pause it on VHS all you got was a fuzzy screen. So detail like this would be lost, even in close-up. It's a testament to the craftsmanship. That's why these items need to be cherished and preserved."

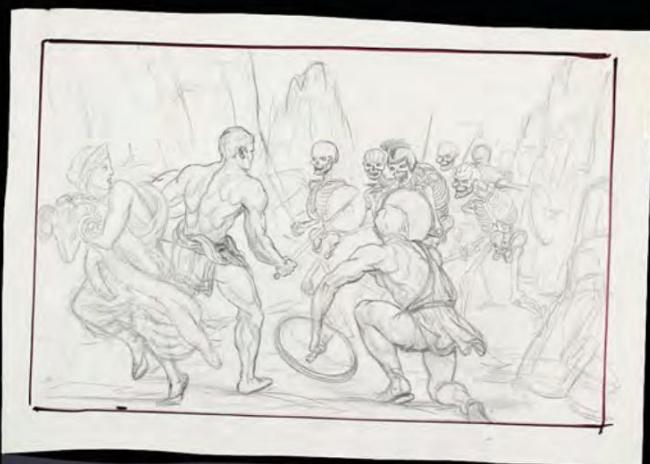
RAY HARRYHAUSEN SKETCHES

JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS

LOW ESTIMATE £2,000

HIGH ESTIMATE £3,000

→ "Ray Harryhausen's art really never comes up for sale. We got to hear about a small collection of antiquities at a provincial auction house. Sitting in the corner was a box of rolled-up papers. Our jaw dropped when we realised what we were looking at. This is probably the most recognisable sequence from the film - and here it's at the conceptual stage. It's an emotive thing to look at."



T-X ENDOSKELETON

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES

LOW ESTIMATE £30,000

HIGH ESTIMATE £50,000

→ "As far as we know this is the only full body animatronic puppet that was built by Stan Winston Studios for the movie. The head itself has a bunch of servos and lights. It's not fully functional at the moment - it would take somebody almost as skilled as Stan Winston to get it back up and running. But parts of it still light up today. It's an impressive thing. You can see the months of work that went into it."

TIE FIGHTER PILOT HELMET

STAR WARS

LOW ESTIMATE £50,000 HIGH ESTIMATE £70,000

→ "This is at the top of the tree for costume pieces from *Star Wars*. For a lot of people the Stormtrooper helmet has more resonance but I love the dark, foreboding, oppressive nature of the TIE Fighter pilot helmet. It's actually a very clever repurposing of components they were already working with - you've got the top of an X-Wing pilot's helmet and part of a Stormtrooper's face plate. It's a thing of beauty."



FLASH'S JACKET

FLASH GORDON

LOW ESTIMATE £5,000 HIGH ESTIMATE £7,000

→ "This came to us from the family of a crew member. It's that distinctive *Flash Gordon* aesthetic. Lots of red and gold, lots of glitter to it. It's just a little bit disco! Some may say they went too far with the satirical humour and the flamboyant approach to the design, but to a lot of other people that's exactly what they love. They're taking it straight off the comic strip page."

X-WING ILM MODEL MINIATURE

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

LOW ESTIMATE £60,000

HIGH ESTIMATE £80,000

→ "On *Star Wars* everything was scratch-built but on *Empire* and *Jedi* they had the opportunity to use commercially available kits for some of the more distant shots. So this is a model kit that the incredibly talented guys at ILM painted, decaled and distressed to give it that used universe look. This would have been used for sequences like the escape from Hoth. The little Artoo is amazing!"



For more details on Prop Store's 27 September live auction go to www.propstore.com/auction

THE DEVIL

YOU
KNOW

Big-screen horror classic **THE EXORCIST** is heading to TV.
Joseph McCabe's head is spinning already...



W

ith horror franchises hitting TV in ever increasing numbers, it was only a matter of time before someone

adapted the most successful fright film in history, director William Friedkin's 1973 masterpiece *The Exorcist* (based on the novel by William Peter Blatty). But while recent shows like *Bates Motel* and *Hannibal* have won audiences and acclaim, series like *The Omen* have been less fortunate. So what does it take to make this tale of demonic possession and those who battle it a hit? And will TV's *The Exorcist* fare better than the original film's many sequels?

"I'll go to bat for *III*," laughs the show's creator Jeremy Slater. "I think *Exorcist III* gets a bad rap. That movie's got some great stuff in it. Is it as good as the original? No, but nothing is as good as the original. But yeah, the problem with a lot of the sequels was that they tried to duplicate the beats of the original film, and that was something we were very conscious of when we were creating this. We can't remake the same show that you've seen before. The only way you can succeed is by doing something new and telling a new story with new characters and hoping audiences will fall in love and will respond to this new story the way audiences did with the original."

That new story is the tale of Angela Rance (played by Oscar winner Geena Davis), whose daughter has recently returned home from college, and who has begun noticing strange things around her home. With a husband (Alan Ruck) suffering from a traumatic brain injury, Angela turns to Father Tomas (Alfonso Herrera), a young priest – who in turn seeks the consultation of Father Marcus (Ben Daniels), a seasoned holy man who's haunted by his own experiences with demonic possession.

"When you look at the original film," says producer-director Rupert Wyatt, "as a filmmaker, William Friedkin, by way of his



Father Tomas (Alfonso Herrera) is holding a torch for something...

background and certainly the films he was making at that particular moment in time, they were very much grounded in a reality. It came from his documentary filmmaking experience. So he was approaching it as an agnostic. He was approaching it as a nonbeliever; or an ambivalent one, at least, in terms of the notion of evil insinuating itself into a situation. Whether that be a demonic presence or whether that be a psychological make-up of a person. That's what made it wholly terrifying – it felt plausible. The subsequent films perhaps veered more in terms of the style and the genre of horror. I don't think Friedkin ever intended to do that. So what we tried to do, although they're huge footsteps to follow in, obviously, is go back to that approach."

While *The Exorcist's* pilot nods to the events of Friedkin's film, Slater tells us the show won't dwell on them as its own story moves forward.

"The reason we put in the scene where Father Tomas is doing research on his computer and you see that the Georgetown exorcisms took place 40 years ago was because, as a horror fan, nothing infuriates me faster than a remake that comes along and says, 'The movie that you love no longer exists. The story that you were invested in is getting wiped out



SCARE TACTICIAN

Geena Davis has a history with horror

Do you notice more weirdness in the world when working on a project like this one?

✦ No, not really, no. I made another horror film quite a while ago, *The Fly*. Well, *Beetlejuice* was humorous... But I don't get spooked by stuff that I know we're just faking. People say, "Oh, you're doing these very heavy scenes. Do you bring it home with you?" I don't really get impacted in those kinds of ways. But I love scary stuff. I love being a part of it.

Are you a horror movie fan?

✦ I love horror movies. Oh, yeah, absolutely. *The Exorcist* curled my hair. Like most people, I saw it when I was a teenager and I was scarred for life. It's really the best horror movie ever made. I think a lot of people agree.

Do you believe in evil?

✦ Oh, I don't know. I believe there is evil in the world, and we've certainly seen instances of it historically and currently, but whether there's a being who is in charge of it and responsible for inserting it in people... I'm not so sure. Everybody is capable of an extreme range of behaviours, and it's [about] what you are exposed to and what your character can resist.



What terrors await Casey (Hannah Kasulka) and Kat Rance (Brianne Howey)?



Father Marcus (Ben Daniels) is called to a most unusual case.



Angela Rance (Geena Davis) discovers things more scary than Beetlejuice.

THE EXORCIST

“IF YOU TRY TO MAKE AN EPISODE THAT’S WALL-TO-WALL HORROR, IT WILL NUMB THE AUDIENCE”

of history.’ It was important to let everyone know that this is a continuation of an existing story. So that was our little nod to say, ‘Don’t worry. The events of the movie, the events of the book, still took place. We’re just telling a brand-new story with new characters 40 years later.’ Hopefully in the same tone, hopefully in the same spirit, hopefully doing justice to the legacy of *The Exorcist*. But we didn’t want audiences to sit there on the edge of their seat waiting for Father Merrin or Father Karras to show up. We didn’t want them to think that we were telling the same story in an oblique way.”

SPINNING IT OUT

Perhaps the biggest narrative challenge facing Slater was turning a single case of demonic possession into a show that could run for multiple seasons.

“Even in the scripting phase,” says the executive producer, “we were very conscious of the fact that you can’t tell an ongoing series where every season, every year, it’s just another American family undergoing a possession. You would burn out the audience really fast. I don’t know how to write that show. I wouldn’t want to watch that show. So it was important to start laying in bread crumbs right from the beginning, start introducing our Dharma Initiative, our bad guys who are out there. There’s little hints of it in the pilot. There’s

little things that don’t quite add up. There’s a priest at St Aquinas with a double pupil. There’s a suspicious landscaping truck that you see a few times. And you’re going to find out a lot more about that in upcoming episodes.

“But the basic idea is that this time around, evil has grander ambitions than just targeting one eight-year-old girl in Georgetown. Evil has a plan. It’s actively working towards that. And even though the possession of the Rance family is our way into the show, that’s our entry point for the audience, hopefully, by the time you get a few episodes in, you’ll look at it and you’ll say, ‘Okay, now I can see how this is a show that can run for eight seasons. I see that they are building a mythology that’s large and expansive and interesting enough to generate story for a long time to come.’”

Though Slater, whose background is in screenwriting, hadn’t previously worked in television, it’s clear from his *Lost* reference that genre TV informs his work on *The Exorcist*.

“I’m a giant nerd, man,” he laughs. “I grew up on *Lost*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Breaking Bad*, all my favourite shows going back to *The X-Files*. People won’t tune in week after week just for scares. You have to tell a story that audiences are not going to see coming, and it has to be about characters that either we’ve never seen before or characters that we fall in love with. Those are the lessons that I take away from shows like *Lost* and *Battlestar*

Galactica – you need the propulsive twists and turns. We have plenty of big plot twists coming up this season, but at the end of the day, it’s always going to be a show about a family in trouble and the two priests that are brought in to help them. If the audience doesn’t care about that, we haven’t done our job.”

Slater admits he’s well aware of the challenge in making iconic material fresh and frightening once more...

“There’s been 40 years of inferior imitations coming along to kind of dilute the source material. Luckily, we have a lot of horror fans behind the scenes, a lot of people who are familiar with the genre. So we can point out, ‘Yes, that’s been done before.’ The CGI contortion of bending over backwards...

There’s just images that have been used so much in the public consciousness that they’ve lost any sort of power to shock that they once had. It’s a blessing and a curse because it forces you to be better writers and better creators.”

Slater says the show’s budget helped his writers exercise the restraint necessary to conjure effective creepiness.

“We are learning a lot about what you can and can’t accomplish on a television budget,” he explains, “and especially with the level of quality that you are seeing in the pilot. We really are making a 43-minute film every single week, week after week, and so you have to be very judicious and very smart about when you use your scares. If you try to make an episode that’s 43 minutes of wall-to-wall horror, not only will it numb and desensitise the audience, but everything will kind of suffer as a result. But if you make a great hour of television with a gripping story and great performances and then you punctuate that with one or two big moments of scares or one great scare per act, the audience knows that the horror is coming. They will be patient as long as their patience is eventually rewarded.”

“So the pressure,” says Slater, “is to tell the best story possible, not to tell the most shocking story possible.” ●

The Exorcist is on Fox in the US. UK TBC.

OFF — THE — MAP

As his new book,
The Gradual, is published,
CHRISTOPHER PRIEST looks
back at his career via five key novels.
Jonathan Wright listens in

Portrait by Rob Monk

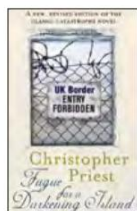
According to Christopher Priest, the speculative novel, which he's worked at for close to half a century now, continues to "intrigue and challenge" him. "It's what I do," he says. "But what I do is still largely misunderstood and distrusted by the literary establishment. I think they are massively missing the point."

Not that, to look at Priest's body of work, you'd immediately discern there was some kind of point. Which isn't a criticism. While

themes and authorly tics – unreliable narrators, realities that are unmappable yet not wholly unknowable, stage magic and sleight of hand, subverting genre tropes – recur, Priest never precisely goes over the same ground twice.

Now in his seventies, his work is as vital, challenging and contemporary as ever. "Day-to-day life is outwardly uneventful," he says. "It involves domestic routines, two cats, walking in the woods, and sitting for hours in a study full of books. Inwardly? That's a bit different..." →

**“ What I do is
still largely
misunderstood
by the literary
establishment ”**



FUGUE FOR A DARKENING ISLAND

1972, Faber & Faber

► Priest's second novel (*Indoctrinaire* preceded it in 1970) was, according to the writer's own intro to a revised version in 2011, his "first attempt at a serious novel".

It's a story of refugees fleeing an African war for Europe and was reviewed as "catastrophe" SF in the tradition of John Wyndham or John Christopher.

But as Priest also points out, these were writers working in the 1950s, a decade that began with austerity Britain grappling with World War II's aftermath and the loss of empire. In contrast, *Fugue* updates the catastrophe novel, reflecting the tensions of the early 1970s. This was an era of rising sectarian violence in Northern Ireland; and when members of the Indian diaspora in Kenya and Uganda fled to the UK because of the rise of authoritarian regimes.

"The refugee crisis is now worldwide, and seems likely to get unstopably worse," Priest says today. "There's no pleasure, I've discovered, in thinking up a likely global disaster then seeing it come horribly true. Wait until global warming really kicks in. Some 120 million people live in hot countries within walking distance of Europe."



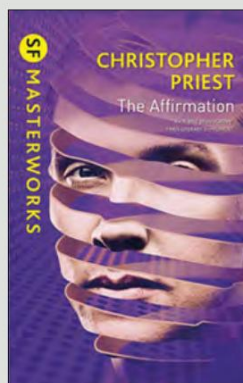
THE PRESTIGE

1995, Touchstone

► Thanks to Christopher Nolan's film, Priest's tale of feuding magicians is easily his best-known novel. "For a long time, *The Prestige* was just one of my novels," he says today. "It was around

for about 12 years before the film was made. I always secretly liked it, but the film ruined that particular private pleasure. It became a sort of public property.

"I can't complain, I liked the film. I think it's one of Christopher Nolan's best, but he left out most of the good stuff. The way the plot works out in the novel still amazes me. It's much more complex and sinister than Nolan's characters, who boringly shoot each other and whisper plot explanations."



THE AFFIRMATION

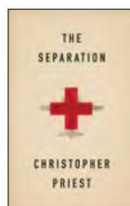
1981, Faber & Faber

► The book Priest describes as his "key" novel is the story of Peter Sinclair, who tries to escape problems in his life by creating fantasy fiction, only to find his real-world and fictional selves merging. It's the book that fully introduces the Dream Archipelago, a series of islands that can never be reliably mapped, within Priest's fiction. Written at a time when Priest was frustrated "with the way the fantastic was being commodified and packaged" in SF franchises, it "liberated" his writing.

"It's always tempting to try to make imaginings literal," he says. "This is why almost every fantasy book these days has a map, a glossary, a family tree etc. People undoubtedly like this.

"Not me: I swim against that tide. I believe in the imaginative power of literature, that ideas and images in fiction are not just the things that are stated. When a poet writes about a rose, or a sunset, or a lover, the words have a double meaning. Of course they are meant literally: a rose, a sunset or a lover, but also these ideas mean something more symbolic, they stand for something that can't be described literally, they express the feeling behind the poem.

"In a similar way, the islands in the Dream Archipelago have a literal function: they are places where people live their lives and do things, where boats dock, where people paint and write and draw, and fall out and make love, have jobs, where stories happen. But the islands also have a metaphorical life, a subtler meaning. I want people who read my stuff to share that double sense, think about it, perhaps enjoy it, and not just wonder what shape the coastline is, or where the Mountains of Gloom are situated."



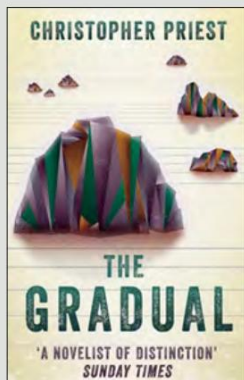
THE SEPARATION

2002, Scribners

► A novel that took the Clarke Award against stiff competition, *The Separation* is an alternate history tale of twin brothers in WWII. One brother is a pilot, the other a conscientious objector.

It had a troubled route towards publication because "a young editor" about whom Priest is less than polite wanted to make the book into a "counterfactual" akin to Robert Harris's *Fatherland* (1992). This entirely missed the point because Priest was more interested in why things turn out how they do than in why they might have turned out differently.

"I wanted to write about the process of history, the unfolding of events, my belief that there's a kind of momentum and inevitability to events," he says. "The Robert Harris counterfactual approach assumes the simplistic idea that Hitler 'won' the war. To me that's ridiculous and untenable: Nazi Germany was vile and sustained by violence, but it was also corrupt and directed by a demagogue, hence fundamentally unstable and weak. If the Allies had not 'won' the war, Nazi Germany would have collapsed anyway."



THE GRADUAL

2016, Gollancz

► Priest's latest novel tells of a composer's travels. It's his third novel inside a little more than half a decade following a long break after *The Separation*. The gap was down to a combination of his children being of school age, "the demoralising after-effects of editorial intervention on *The Separation*" and the distraction of *The Prestige* being filmed. *The Gradual*, *The Islanders* (2011) and, to a lesser extent, *The Adjacent* (2013) see him once again exploring the Dream Archipelago.

"I don't make decisions about these things: they come upon me," he says. "I went several years without writing about the Archipelago, but then one day I started thinking about it again and it gained a grip on

me. At its most basic level, the world of islands is a sort of blank canvas, where background outlines have already been shaded in, leaving the foreground for stories. I have several Archipelago stories still in mind, but I think I will leave it for now.

"The state of living on an island runs deep through most people in this country, me no less than anyone else. I often fall asleep to the sound of the BBC shipping bulletin, a soothing rhythm of storms and lulls, great winds and foggy banks, a sense of a maritime world going on just a short distance away. I dream of a world where there is nothing but islands, coasts, shallow straits, ferries to and fro."

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Brought



To Book

LAURE EVE

The rising YA star tells us why she's mesmerised by glamorous people

Words by Jonathan Wright /// Photography by Joe Branton

From a geek perspective, surfers are scum. Cool, athletic and comfortable in their own skins, they hang out on beaches, which everyone knows are just an invitation to get sand in your iPad. And yet, as Laure Eve reflects as she looks back on her teenage years growing up in Cornwall, there's something curiously alluring about them too.

"Everyone feels like an outsider, but I was a rock and metal gothy kid who dressed weird and was very abrasive," she says. "I always secretly wanted to be as chilled and cool as the surfers but I just couldn't be that way, I was far too emotional and weird. I went out with a couple of surfers. I tried to be that girl who hangs out on the beach in shorts and looks really great doing it, but I was not that kind of girl, in fact."

Relax, Eve is laughing as she finishes this sentence, so the experience can't have been too traumatic. Indeed, you could even say it's been positive in that her new novel, *The Graces*, riffs off our collective fascination with the kinds of glamorous people, like certain surfers, who "everybody loves and hates in equal measure". The elevator pitch, she says, is *The Craft* meets *The Virgin Suicides*.

"Everyone can remember that girl or that small group in school who everybody worshipped," she says. "I find that's fascinating because it's a very human thing to do, to put people on a pedestal, and idolise and worship them. That's very much part of our celebrity culture nowadays as well."

But this sets up a tension. The closer we get to those we find alluring, the more their flaws become evident. This idea is central to the narrative of *The Graces*, which focuses on three "very popular, very mysterious" and, rumour has it, eldritch siblings, and why our (unreliable) narrator, River, is so drawn to the trio.

TEENAGE KICKS

Eve's third novel, *The Graces*, aimed at a YA audience, caused a bidding war last year. As to why, one reason lies in that elevator pitch. When it went out on submission, says Eve, a recurring reaction among editors was, "Oh my god, I remember *The Craft*, I love that film so much." If you're still confused (shame on you), we're talking the 1996 supernatural horror about outsider teenagers with magical powers they don't exactly use wisely.

"It's one of those weird little cult films that seeped into every girl's consciousness because it's not really about witchcraft, although it is, it's more about empowerment and toxic friendships and the darkness of teenagers, which is very attractive to other teenagers," says Eve.

Particularly, you'd guess, a teen such as Eve growing up on the Cornish coast, close to St Ives, in the 1980s and 1990s. Half French and half English, she was "a child of two cultures" who never quite fitted in. "In England I was always the French girl and in France I was always the English cousin," she says. "It's a very strange outsider mentality that you tend to get." Then there were the complications of the English class system. Her parents didn't have much cash but she went to a school where people certainly had money, "bags of the stuff, lying about the place, and they lived in giant houses with horses' paddocks round the back".

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Confronted at every turn by surfers, nascent Brexit voters and the well-to-do, Eve did the only sensible thing. While she loves Cornwall, her Cornish friends and the wild landscapes when you get close to Land's End that are "heavy and strange" to walk in, she left. "I was of a very bohemian, arty persuasion and decided I would either be a writer or an actor or an artist or something, but I would be *something* like that, whatever it took," she says. More specifically, she headed for university in Manchester and a contemporary arts degree that involved creative writing and drama.

"You'd just walk through campus and people would be playing the ukulele half naked or covered in chocolate sauce rolling around on the grass, covering themselves in blood or something and screaming at the sky, because that's contemporary arts, man," she says. "It was that kind of campus and it was *amazing*, full of slightly crazy people."

She did her fair share of crazy things herself, like a performance of *The Vagina Monologues* that involved her being "completely naked for 45 minutes straight on stage". That sounds terrifying... "Let me clarify, my back was to the audience." Did that make a difference? "Yes it did, cos it meant I couldn't see them." On another occasion, she appeared in a play where, solo in a flashback scene, she had to recreate the experience of being raped. Her mother, sister and boyfriend of the time were in the audience.

After graduation, she eventually headed for London, where she works in publishing. Taking her friend, American editor and bestselling writer David Levithan, as a "role model", she has no plans to go full-time as a novelist. "If he can do it, I figure I can do it," she says. A sequel to *The Graces* is currently with Eve's editor. ●

The Graces is published by Faber & Faber.

Biodata

Occupation

→ Novelist

Born

→ 10 May 1983

From

→ Paris, France

Greatest Hits

→ Prior to *The Graces*, Eve wrote two novels, *Fearsome Dreamer* and *The Illusionist*, both about an apprentice hedgewitch, Vela Rue, and published in 2014.

Random Fact

→ There were certain "pagan aspects" to her childhood in Cornwall, says Eve, like the time she was May Queen in "a long, white, virginal dress" – "I was in *The Wicker Man*, unknowingly..."



“EVERYONE
CAN REMEMBER
THAT GIRL IN
SCHOOL WHO
EVERYBODY
WORSHIPPED”

SUPERMAN RETURNS

Nostalgia-drenched misfire or a love letter to a '70s classic? Ten years on, Luke Dormehl recalls the Man of Steel's controversial comeback



In the first half of the 2000s, screen adaptations of Superman were something of a poisoned chalice. On television, the character had flourished, with both *The New Adventures Of Superman* and *Smallville* proving big successes. The big screen was another matter, however. There hadn't been a new Superman movie since 1987's *Superman IV: The Quest for*

Peace, which had deservedly flopped at the box office, a sad end to the franchise Richard Donner had started in 1978. Warner Bros purchased the Superman movie rights from original producers the Salkinds in 1993, but nothing much happened. Scripts went through rewrite and rewrite, but the only things appearing on screen were growing development costs on a Warner spreadsheet.

"It had been through a string of directors," Guy Dias, the production designer on *Superman Returns*, tells *SFX*. "Everyone, if you can believe it, from Tim Burton to Oliver Stone for a split-second. James Cameron had had a look at it, and then there was McG of *Charlie's Angels* fame – who, legend has it, couldn't do it because he was fearful of flying, of all things for someone who was going to direct Superman. He couldn't get on the plane to Australia which is where [Warner] intended to make the film."

Having come the closest with Tim Burton's abortive *Superman Reborn* movie, starring Nicolas Cage, the producers scored a major coup when they signed Bryan Singer, fresh off the highly-successful first two X-Men films.

Singer had successfully built the X-movies around the characters and wanted to do the same with Superman. "[His idea was to make a film that] was about people today,"

recalls producer Gil Adler. "[It was about getting us] to care about Superman not because he's the Man of Steel, not because Zod or anyone else is going to destroy him, but because he had the same problems, issues and concerns that you and I have. To us, that gave us an anchor that should appeal to men and women."

Singer first met with Adler at a dinner meeting that began at nine o'clock in the evening and continued until four the following morning. Singer wasn't, in fact, a big comic book fan, but his suggestions fascinated Adler. As well as the focus on Superman's humanity, another big theme of the *Superman Returns* pitch was to make a point about the absence of the character from the life of audiences. This is something the comics had already done with the "Death Of Superman" story arc, not so much a Superman story as a story about the negation of Superman – and whether he had any place in the modern world. In Singer's vision, filled in by screenwriters

Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris, the character has been away from the world for five years, and returns to discover that things have moved on without him. Love interest Lois Lane has even had a child and moved on to a new romantic interest, while winning a Pulitzer Prize for an editorial entitled "Why the World Doesn't Need Superman".

"What really appealed to Bryan about Superman was the aspect of the character that a lot of us forget: that he's on his own, alienated, and the only surviving person from his planet," says Dias. One way of doing this was the controversial move of making Superman an absentee father: with Lois Lane having (spoiler!) given birth to his son, unbeknownst to Superman, while he's been away. ➔





The new “outsider” Superman was played by relative newcomer Brandon Routh, who bore a striking resemblance to previous Superman movie actor Christopher Reeve. Routh’s Hollywood agent had actually signed him on this basis, gushing that, “if there’s another Superman movie you’re going to get it.” Like Reeve, Routh was a virtual unknown at the time of production. Just 25 years old, he had previously played bit-parts in shows like the soap opera *One Life To Live* and the Christina Aguilera music video “What a Girl Wants”. Interestingly, Routh actually auditioned for the role of Clark Kent in *Smallville* in 2000, but failed to get it.

Kate Bosworth was cast as Lois Lane while James Marsden, Cyclops in Singer’s *X-Men* films, played her love interest, Richard White. Kevin Spacey became the new Lex Luthor, inheriting the role from Gene Hackman, while Alfred Hitchcock’s *North By Northwest* leading lady Eva Marie Saint was signed to play Ma Kent. Hugh Laurie – working on the Singer-produced medical series *House* – was originally set to play *Daily Planet* editor Perry White but had to drop out and was replaced by Frank Langella.

Shooting on *Superman Returns* began in Australia in February 2005, with a budget stretching north of \$200 million. “We were all extremely sceptical about going to shoot in Australia and trying to recreate this classic art deco American look for the movie,” Dyas tells *SFX*. “However, we ended up having a fantastic experience. The crew was second-to-none, having just come off working on *The Matrix* sequels. We also found some amazing locations. We shot the Kents’ farm scenes in a place called Tamworth, which turned out to be the country music capital of Australia. From the ground-up we built this entire farm with a barn and livestock, irrigation systems and fields and fields of corn. It was an enormous set that stretched about five or six acres.”

Filming on Australia’s Gold Coast went well, after which there was a one-year period for editing and optical effects to be added. This included the recreation of Marlon Brando – by the special effects house Rhythm & Hues, based on original archival footage – for a cameo as Superman’s father, Jor-El.

The finished movie debuted on 28 June 2006. Within five days of its launch, *Superman Returns* had earned \$84.2 million, setting a new record for Warner Bros, and beating their previous record for *The Matrix Revolutions*. Reviews were generally positive too, with some – like *Time*’s Richard Corliss – ranking it among the best superhero films ever made, although others took issue with the film’s perceived glum tone. The movie’s undisputed highlight

DREAMING THE AMERICANA DREAM Designing Superman

→ From a production design perspective, *Superman Returns* is a film with multiple planes of reference. The most obvious is to Richard Donner’s 1978 *Superman*, although that film also appropriated some of the art deco stylings of the extraordinary Fleischer Superman cartoons of the 1940s. Interestingly, both *Superman Returns* designer Guy Dyas and *Superman* designer John Barry (who also worked on *Star Wars*) were born in the UK. “It’s very interesting that, until the Zack Snyder films, the Superman films were designed by Brits,” Dyas says. “If you haven’t grown up in America, I think there’s the ability to look at America and really celebrate the things about it that make Americana so iconic.”



He’s behind you!



“At least I’m not Jesse Eisenberg!”

was the scene in which Superman saves a plane carrying Lois Lane. It is a magnificent action sequence, and producer Gil Adler says he enjoyed sneaking into cinemas during the film’s theatrical run to hear how the crowd reacted to it.

Over time, however, the audience response to *Superman Returns* cooled – and with it the commitment of the studio, who had originally intended it to spawn, at the least, a trilogy. “I don’t think we ever got an answer to [why they didn’t continue with the franchise],” Adler says. “It seems to me that the studio wanted more action than we gave them. They felt that the movie would have gone further had it had more action. This is all in retrospect, of course. We’re all Monday morning quarterbacks. We intentionally set things up in the first movie to have an arena in which to place a second movie, but they just chose to go another way.”





The red underpants were still alive in 2006.



Bryan Singer directing the first of a trilogy that never was.

“I THINK THAT GIVEN THE CHANCE BRYAN WOULD HAVE MADE AN ABSOLUTELY SPECTACULAR SECOND SUPERMAN FILM”

Guy Dyas says that the movie originally had more action sequences, but that these were cut for budgetary reasons. “By the end of the film ... we were being reined-in,” he notes. “There were many scenes that Bryan was developing in the form of storyboards that would have brought a heightened level of action to the film than you eventually saw. We couldn’t do it because the studio was nervous.”

Had the movie followed the template of Singer’s *X-Men* movies, Dyas believes the sequel to *Superman Returns* would have been more action-oriented. “*X-Men 1* was about developing the characters, *X-Men 2* was where we saw the characters doing a lot of action,” he says. “That sort of process would have been absolutely fantastic [with Bryan’s Superman films].”



UP, UP AND AWRY

You won’t believe a man can fly

→ Being Superman on-screen sounds like a whole lot of fun, but – like playing James Bond – it comes with a certain amount of physical danger. Filming a flying scene in which Superman reunites with Lois Lane on top of the *Daily Planet* building, the harness holding Routh sent him crashing noisily into a rafter in the studio ceiling. Since the scene was still being shot, Routh stayed quiet, leading the crew to freak out at the possibility that they had badly injured their supposedly indestructible superhero. Fortunately he turned out to be fine.

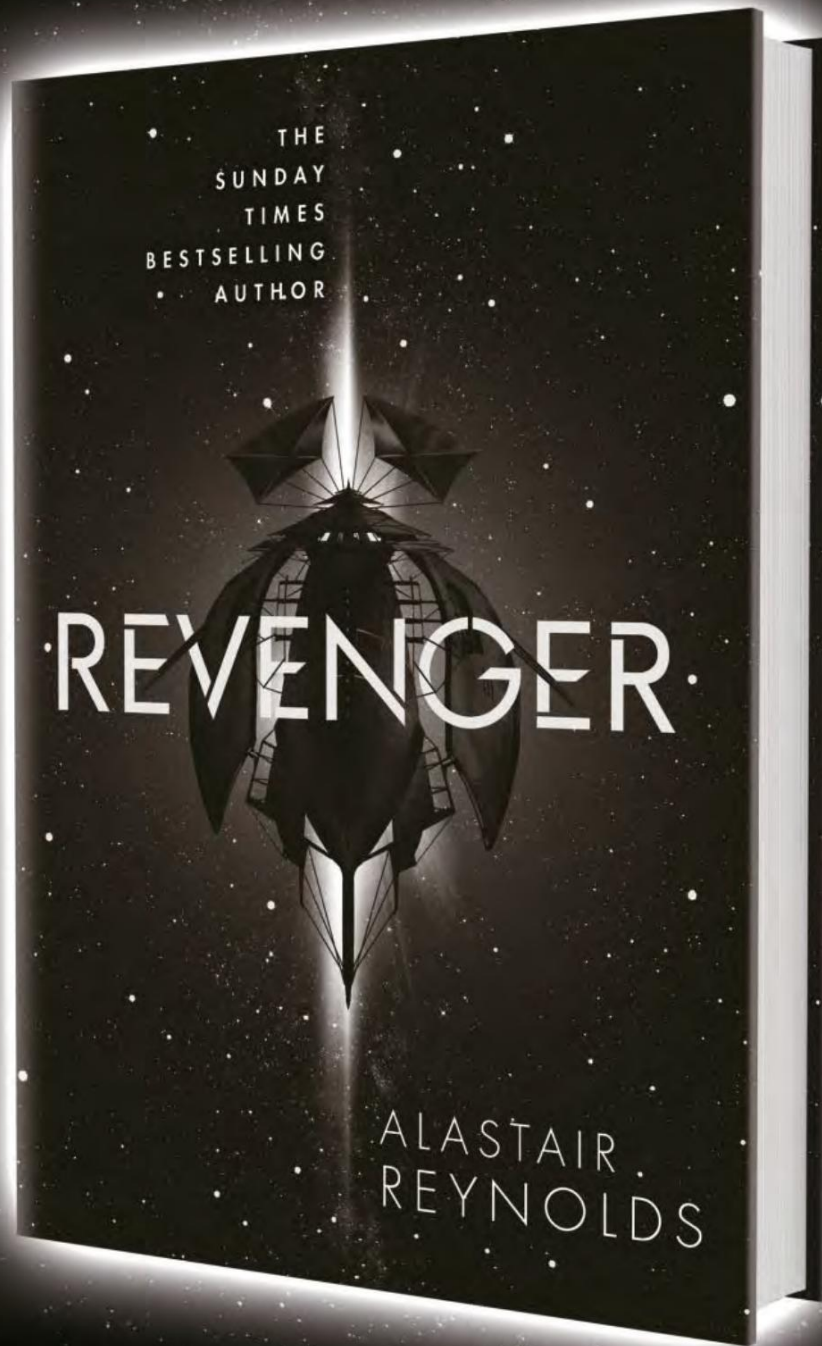
Thematically, the lack of sequel for *Superman Returns* is not altogether inappropriate. Although it had a generally young cast, and followed *Batman Begins* to cinemas as a metaphorical “reset” button for an absent franchise, it is a film which looks back – not forwards. Anyone leaving the cinema after watching it was likely to want to revisit Richard Donner’s original 1978 film, which served as the film’s chief inspiration, rather than

anticipate a further sequel. *Superman Returns* is, in a lot of ways, a nostalgic film: even the biggest moments of triumph are underscored by John Williams’s original Superman march, which was dusted off again for the film’s theme.

This isn’t to say that *Superman Returns* is a bad movie, though. The least charitable thing one might say about it is that it’s an interesting failure. It came at a time when superhero movies, far from being micromanaged studio production line products, were being handed over to the indie darlings of the previous decade. In this vein, *Superman Returns* followed on from Ang Lee’s 2003 *Hulk* and Chris Nolan’s 2005 *Batman Begins*: the former an underrated character study, the latter the movie which helped reignite interest in the superhero genre. *Superman Returns* is certainly a film that deserves reevaluating.

“I’m still a little sad in retrospect, because I think that given the chance Bryan would have made an absolutely spectacular second Superman film,” Dyas says about the proposed follow-up, which – like Zack Snyder’s subsequent reboot – would have been called *Man Of Steel*. “I’m convinced it would have been on the level of *The Dark Knight*. But he never got that chance.” ●

In the rubble of a ruined universe
an epic adventure awaits . . .



'A mastersinger of the Space Opera'
The Times



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NOV
2016

edited by Ian Berriman

Reviews

CINEMA 94	HOME ENTERTAINMENT 98	BOOKS 108	COMICS 118	GAMES & STUFF 120	COLLECTABLES 122
-----------	-----------------------	-----------	------------	-------------------	------------------



98
PREACHER
Season One
Anyone for Ennis?

THIS ISSUE
61
REVIEWS

Highlights



94
BLAIR WITCH
→ The found-footage classic gets a sequel that's rather like a remake. But is it a patch on the original?



97
THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS
→ Mike Carey's unusual modern zombie novel hits the big screen.



108
REVENGER
→ Space pirates ahoy! Alastair Reynolds hoists the Jolly Roger for a YA caper.

→ RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ SUPERB ★★★★★ GOOD ★★★★★ AVERAGE ★★★★★ POOR ★★★★★ TERRIBLE

BLAIR WITCH

Above Parr



▶ **RELEASED** 16 SEPTEMBER

15 | 89 minutes

▶ Director Adam Wingard

▶ Cast Corbin Reid, Wes Robinson, Valorie Curry, James Allen McCune

❖ If you were lucky enough to see *The Blair Witch Project* in a cinema back in 1999, you may well have found the audience starkly divided, with some willing to submit to and submerge themselves in the film's world, while others, scornful in the face of a tidal wave of hype, stage-whispered, "This isn't that scary" to their mates. Seventeen long years later, Adam Wingard's revival of the long-dormant franchise is likely to face similar resistance – but this time it'll probably be fans of the original who are crossing their arms and challenging the film, "Go on then, impress me."

Reviving *Blair Witch* is obviously a project fraught with difficulty. The original was a massive cultural phenomenon, of the sort which only arises when all the right planets align. Although *TBWP* didn't invent faux-found-footage horror – we can credit 1980's *Cannibal Holocaust* with that – it was the first example most people had seen. In 2016, thanks largely to *Paranormal Activity*'s

budget-to-box-office ratio, it's a style of filmmaking that's become wearily over-familiar. Wisely, however, Wingard and screenwriter Simon Barrett don't throw the baby out with the bathwater by abandoning the format.

Once again we follow a group of student filmmakers as they head into a Maryland forest to document the legends surrounding child-murdering serial killer Rustin Parr and his inspiration, the spirit of an executed witch. Once again, exiting the woods proves much more difficult than entering them. And once again, everything's recorded for posterity – this time with the aid of earpiece-cams and a drone, at an image resolution which means the aesthetic is markedly less grungy.

It's the right path to take. Extract *Blair Witch* from the woods, or tell the story a different way, and you'd end up with something that's more original but isn't really *Blair Witch*. However, it does mean that for at least half its duration this is a sequel which feels surprisingly like a remake.

Gradually, however, points of difference emerge – and some may prove controversial. *TBWP* was famously enigmatic; it challenged you to fill in the gaps,



The Mulder and Scully cosplay competition got going.

speculating and imagining unseen horrors. To progress beyond being a mere retread, *Blair Witch* has little choice but to expand upon the original. It does so by telling us and showing us a little more, and generally going further.

So, for example, we learn exactly how the witch was executed – a detail which has hideous significance when we finally actually get to see her. The geographical dislocation of *TBWP* – which sent its bickering camera crew round in circles – is here expanded to encompass temporal dislocation. There's even an

“Judged on its own terms, it's pretty effective”

explanation of sorts for the sinister stick figures once again left suspended from branches.

For some, these will be fundamental betrayals. But *Blair Witch* has to give us something new, and most of these innovations work rather well – the witch, for



Barbara Windsor's flying bikini top caused chaos.



example, is an impressively shiver-inducing monstrosity.

One tweak which arguably backfires, however, removes a key element of the original: the depressing days spent tramping through the forest, knowing that nightfall is sure to bring another visitation. There was a horrible grim inevitability to those scenes, and excising them is like making a *Ring* film that all takes place in one day; one's left wondering if the filmmakers didn't trust the audience to stoically endure such painful repetition. And convincingly panic-stricken

though the young cast are, their more conventional, Hollywood-dentistry attractiveness does slightly diminish the sense of watching recorded reality.

But the last 20 minutes or so are a triumph. Cranking up the tension to nails-dug-into-palms levels, they see our heroes ending up at the same destination as their predecessors. Thanks in large part to first-rate sound design, these sequences are gruelling, suffused with dread, and liable to leave you feeling quite exhausted.

Chances are some fans of *The Blair Witch Project* will feel *Blair*

Witch sells out in its quest for mainstream appeal. But judged purely on its own terms, it's a pretty effective horror film. If *TBWP* had never existed, it'd probably be hailed as something special. As it is, it's a solidly enjoyable revival – better than most modern-day reboots, *hugely* superior to the 2000 sequel, and certain to reignite interest in the original. So let's not make Adam Wingard stand in the corner.

Ian Berriman

i While working on the soundtrack, Adam Wingard managed to stub his toe so badly that he broke it. We're blaming the witch.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

What happened to the stars of *The Blair Witch Project*?



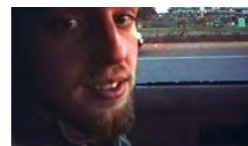
HEATHER DONAHUE

Donahue's biggest role post-*Blair Witch* was in Spielberg miniseries *Taken*. After realising she no longer wanted to act, she burned all her mementoes in the desert. Then her life literally went to pot: she became a medicinal marijuana grower! She now runs a herbal remedy company.



MICHAEL C WILLIAMS

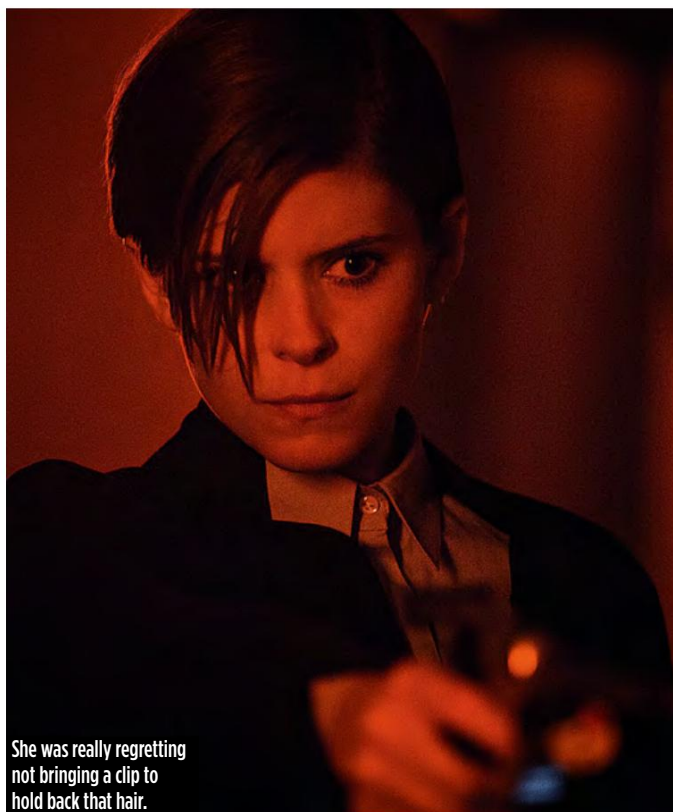
After guest roles in the likes of *Law & Order* and *Without A Trace*, Williams switched careers and studied to become a guidance counsellor, mentoring kids and running anti-bullying classes. He now works at a Middle School in New York State, and also teaches acting at an arts centre.



JOSHUA LEONARD

Josh went on to have the most consistent success as an actor, with credits including *Humpday*, *True Detective* and *Bates Motel* (in which he played a love interest for Norma Bates). Last year he got married to *The Newsroom*/*Scott Pilgrim* star Alison Pill.

CINEMA



She was really regretting not bringing a clip to hold back that hair.

MORGAN

Artificial strife



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

15 | 92 minutes

▶ Director **Luke Scott**

▶ Cast **Kate Mara, Anya Taylor-Joy, Rose Leslie, Toby Jones**

❖ **In filmmaking terms, the** apple may not fall far from the tree (for both good and ill). Luke Scott – son of Ridley, who produced this – kicks off his feature directing career with something his father might have made, a close-quarters tale of technology gone awry and a creature that could either be a boon or a threat to humanity.

In this case, the claustrophobic, controlled conditions are a high-tech lab where an artificial being, Morgan (Anya Taylor-Joy), has just brutally attacked one of her carers (Jennifer Jason Leigh). Corporate trouble-shooter Lee

Weathers (Kate Mara) is brought in to determine the next step: continue the research or terminate Morgan's existence.

Scott has a good line in measured, careful shots and knows how to generate tension – especially in a scene between Morgan and a cranky shrink played by Paul Giamatti. Though not everyone has enough to do, the performances are solid, particularly those of Taylor-Joy and Mara, who handle the lion's share of the drama.

It's when the movie falls back on formula and becomes derivative of other, better films on a similar subject – such as last year's *Ex Machina* – that it suffers by comparison. **Jim Blakey**

i For research purposes, Luke Scott visited the labs at Belfast's Queen's University. Now we're wondering what he saw...

UNDER THE SHADOW

Tehran terror



▶ **RELEASED 30 SEPTEMBER**

TBC | 84 minutes

▶ Director **Babak Anvari**

▶ Cast **Narges Rashidi, Avin Manshadi, Bobby Naderi, Ray Haratian**

❖ **Mothers protecting their** young is a familiar trope in horror films (see also *Poltergeist*, *Dark Water*), but first-time director Babak Anvari pumps fresh urgency into the concept with *Under The Shadow*, a film that masterfully blends its period setting, haunted house aesthetic and sociopolitical undercurrents into a coherent, slow-burn scare machine with something to say.

In 1988 Tehran, the high-rise home of Shideh (Narges Rashidi) is constantly quaking under the threat of bombs. When an undetonated projectile crashes into the apartment upstairs – mere

days after Shideh's husband has been shipped off to the frontline of the Iran-Iraq War – it coincides with her daughter, Dorsa (Avin Manshadi), spotting a mysterious figure in their home.

Cranking up the tension slowly, Anvari crafts early domestic scenes with dark wit (Shideh's aerobics VHS is a nice touch) before unleashing J-horror-esque terrors: there are strange noises in the night, Shideh suffers surreal nightmares, and Dorsa's favourite doll goes missing. Shideh rubbishes her neighbour's claim that a djinn is loose in the building, but as she searches for the truth, Anvari's composed camerawork gradually untethers itself from reality, gliding and spinning unexpectedly, deploying scares that are as surprising as they are effective.

As in all the best scary movies, the horrors here are all-too



human, as Shideh battles both the smothering malevolence of patriarchy and the phantoms of war-torn Tehran. Shades of *The Babadook* and *Pan's Labyrinth* abound, but *Under The Shadow* has more under the surface. Rashidi is terrific as a woman at her wits' end, realistically flawed and desperate to do the right thing despite the odds, and when the

baddie is finally unveiled, it packs a punch that only deepens the horror, posing questions most mainstream horror would cringe from. That said, it surely won't be long before the Hollywood remake machine gets its claws into this one... **Josh Winning**

i The aerobics VHS was inspired by Anvari's own childhood – a health freak neighbour used to give his mum Jane Fonda videos.

THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS

Pray she doesn't give you any



► **RELEASED 23 SEPTEMBER**
15 | 111 minutes

► Director **Colm McCarthy**

► Cast **Sennia Nanua, Gemma Arterton, Paddy Considine, Glenn Close**

❖ **Just when you thought you'd** seen every possible spin on the zombie movie, along comes someone with a startling new idea. *The Girl With All The Gifts* might be a zombie movie, but it's also a road movie, an eco-horror, and a bold political statement. And it's great at being all of those things.

Roughly a decade after the outbreak of a mysterious virus that turns people into mindless

slavering cannibals, the UK's few survivors are holed up in heavily guarded military camps. In one of them, Base Hotel Echo, teacher Helen Justineau (Gemma Arterton) has formed an unusual bond with one of her most gifted students, Melanie (Sennia Nanua). Unfortunately, their relationship is likely to be short-lived, because Melanie's got an appointment with the operating table of the camp's scariest scientist, Dr Caldwell (Glenn Close).

Luckily (or not), before the scalpels come out, the base is overrun by "Hungries", forcing Justineau, Caldwell and Melanie to flee in the back of a truck. Thus

begins a journey not just across London but also across prejudices, as Justineau and co struggle to make sense of what's left of the world, and start to question what "surviving" even means.

Sounds a bit thinky? It's okay. Every time the ontological arguments threaten to get too intense, director Colm McCarthy chucks in a chase scene – and there's more than one moment where you'll find yourself holding your breath as characters attempt to make their way through Hungry-infested hellholes. While it's no surprise that the likes of Paddy Considine and Glenn Close turn in nuanced performances, the film's real star is 12-year-old Sennia Nanua; she's equal parts bright, endearing, and terrifying.

There are a few minor flaws to pick at. Some of the plot contrivances strain credulity, while fans of screenwriter Mike Carey's original novel will notice a

“Moments where you'll be holding your breath”

couple of beats are missing. It's also tough to believe anyone could call the infected "Hungries" with a straight face when the term "Zombies" is available (and universally understood!). But this is all pretty easy to forgive, especially because the list of the things the film gets right – its intelligent world-building, its wonderfully eerie soundtrack, its subtly horrifying creature effects, and its brilliantly realised characters – is so much longer than the list of things it fumbles.

The evocative title is a riff on Greek mythology, specifically the story of Pandora's box. Exactly how that applies to Melanie doesn't become clear until the very end, but when it does, it'll give you goosebumps. You may never look at a zombie in the same way again... **Sarah Dobbs**

i Most of the scenes set in post-apocalyptic London were actually shot in Shirley, in the West Midlands.



"I'd like to be in a different film please."

NINE LIVES



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

PG | 87 minutes

❖ **If there's one thing we** know in the modern age, everybody likes a kooky cat video. And if there's one thing we knew in the '80s, everybody liked a good body-swap comedy.

Nine Lives bridges that gap with a story about a billionaire real estate mogul (Kevin Spacey) who ends up in a coma and somehow trades his consciousness with a cat named Mister Fuzzypants. Since he hates cats, it's a real insult-to-injury situation. So's this movie. By the end you will hate cats, Spacey and the '80s. **Ken McIntyre**



The striking tube workers' picket line was a bit rubbish.

ALSO + OUT



Barely any need for this round-up, cos we reviewed so much last issue! **SET THE THAMES ON FIRE**, a dystopian fairytale featuring Noel Fielding, is getting a limited theatrical release on 16 September; a DVD follows hot on its heels. On 21 September, Manga Entertainment will be celebrating their 25th birthday (congrats!) with one-night-only screenings of anime classic **AKIRA**. Visit akirathemovie.co.uk for a list of the 70+ screens where it's playing. Finally, on 30 September Tim Burton takes us to a very unusual orphanage in book adap **MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN**.

PREACHER

Season One

God's moving in mysterious ways



EXTRAS ★★☆☆

► **RELEASED 17 OCTOBER**

2016 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

► Creators Seth Rogen, Evan Goldberg, Sam Catlin

► Cast Dominic Cooper, Ruth Negga, Joseph Gilgun, Ian Colletti, Lucy Griffiths, Tom Brooke

❖ **There are some people who** will insist that the *Preacher* TV series is terrible. Most of these people are fans of the comic who hate the fact that the TV show is pretty much nothing like it. Which is fair comment. But if you watched the show totally ignorant of what it was based on, you wouldn't care. You'd just know you were watching something extraordinary and stupidly entertaining.

Sure, the show bears so little resemblance to Garth Ennis's source material – a kind of supernatural road movie in comic book form – that it's easy to understand fans' frustration. Why bother calling it *Preacher* at all? On the other hand, there are just enough similarities to ensure that Ennis would be suing if the series' producers had tried to pass it off as something original (even if

they'd changed the names). Bottom line is: if *Preacher* the comic is responsible for inspiring the exquisite madness that is *Preacher* the TV series, then praise be to the comic. And if the TV series gets people reading Ennis's work, then nobody's really lost out, have they?

The one-line pitch may have been: it's about a small-town Texan preacher who becomes the host for a celestial being that gives him the power to command people to do what he wants them to do. On the other hand, it could have been: what if the Coen Brothers had directed *From Dusk Till Dawn*? The Coens' influence is everywhere, from the use of quirky pop and country songs on the soundtrack to the casting of engaging small-town misfits, to the numerous random scenes and images that initially seem to exist in splendid isolation, their relevance only later becoming clear. It's also gloriously, cartoonishly gory at times, and has more twists than that spaghetti of wires behind your TV set; that's the Tarantino in its DNA.

Case in point: there's a bat's-arse fight scene in episode six that's unlike anything you've



The fellas had a good discussion about the smoking ban.



"Can't you just put Athena posters on your walls?"

seen on TV before. Genuinely. No hyperbole. Straight up unique, and a total blast. How often do you watch a television show and think, "Blimey, never seen that done before"? For this alone, *Preacher* deserves high praise. It's actually doing something – gasp – original. And there's quite a lot of that going on in the show. Hell, it's even found new things to do with a vampire. Horrible things mainly, that require the deaths of many innocent dumb animals.

Joseph Gilgun provides the stand-out performance as shameless, motormouth Irish

“Preacher is doing something – gasp – original”

vampire Cassidy; he gets all the best lines, but also gives the show some heart. Because poor old Dominic Cooper, playing preacher Jesse Custer, has to go through the whole “power corrupts” storyline



in this first season before learning the “with great power” lesson; and while Cooper gives a totally committed and raw performance, Jesse is, by necessity, a dick for much of the season. Ruth Negga is wonderful as sassy ex-girlfriend Tulip, though you do wonder what she sees in Jesse at times. Of the back-up cast, Ian Colletti is heartbreakingly good as hideously-scarred, self-loathing teen Arseface, while Jackie Earl Haley makes his mark as odious slaughterhouse boss Odin Quincannon.

There are problems. The pace sags seriously mid-season. There’s

an intriguing subplot involving a gunslinger that vanishes for episodes on end. Jesse doesn’t use his powers half as much as you’d like. And occasionally the wackiness has an artificial “insert wacky moment here” feel. Interestingly, the season ends roughly in a place which suggests that the next series could be much more like the comics. So maybe season two *could* end up pleasing everybody.

✚ **Extras** The DVD has deleted/extended scenes (17 minutes), plus featurettes on the pilot and the stunts (15 minutes). The Blu-ray

(rated) adds featurettes on the character Saint of Killers and episode two’s chainsaw fight (13 minutes), plus a gag reel (five minutes). An Amazon-exclusive Collector’s Edition Blu-ray has an extra disc with four more bonuses: the table read of the pilot (60 minutes) and featurettes on costumes, prosthetics and filming the big finale sequence (21 minutes); it also comes with a hardback graphic novel of issues 1-12 of the comic. **Dave Golder**

i Showrunner Sam Catlin has some vocal cameos: he’s the radio announcer heard in the pilot and in the season finale.



DOMINIC COOPER

Jesse Custer
in *Preacher*



How did you approach playing Jesse?

→ I just needed to truly believe this man’s origin, his background, where he comes from. That was work for me, just in terms of the nature of where he comes from. He’s a man from rural Texas, he’s gone back to a very small town. But at some point you say to yourself, “There has to be some part of me that is true to him.”

How would you describe Jesse’s relationship with Irish vampire Cassidy?

→ They’re good friends. But they disagree so hugely on the idea of life, and these discussions keep coming up; and they reveal a lot about who they are. They’re trying to redeem themselves by doing something better... Joe Gilgun and I go into a room and the place where it starts is very different from the place where it ends up.

Was it hard to get the accent right?

→ It’s very easy to make a caricature of the accent. You start going into some deep southern drawl. It was always about pulling it back. With accents it’s always about doing less. I did a much heavier Texan at first, and it became lighter... I think there should be subtitles for Cassidy! **Joseph McCabe**



DRINKING GAME

Knock back a beverage of your choice every time...

- 🍷 Ash says something that's clearly intended to be a catchphrase.
- 🍷 A decapitated head speaks.
- 🍷 Ash hits on someone inappropriately.
- 🍷 A chainsaw is thrown towards Ash's stump.
- 🍷 Pablo calls Ash "Jefe". Take another swig if Ash seems annoyed by it.
- 🍷 Ash says something dumb – or refers to the fact that he's said something dumb.
- 🍷 A member of the cast gets doused in fake blood.

Some National Trust properties are livelier than others.

ASH VS EVIL DEAD Season One

Bruce Campbell vs fan expectations

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 19 SEPTEMBER

2016 | 18 | DVD

▶ Showrunner Craig DiGregorio

▶ Cast Bruce Campbell, Dana DeLorenzo, Lucy Lawless, Jill Marie Jones

🔴 **It's taken over two decades of campaigning** (and required suffering through an Ash-free reboot), but *Evil Dead* maniacs finally had their patience rewarded this year, as a fourth outing for reluctant hero Ash Williams finally hit our screens – bringing Bruce Campbell back to the franchise where he belongs, to update the character that made him a big-chinned icon.

Okay, so those screens were in living rooms and not cinemas, but the (possessed) spirit was

essentially the same, and surely the extended TV format would serve the series better than a 90-minute film, right? Right? Well, yes and no.

Let's start with the good stuff. An older (but not wiser) Ash digs out the Necronomicon, Book of the Dead, to impress a girl. Accidentally resurrecting his old enemies, the demonic Deadites, he hits the road to put right what he got very, very wrong. It's a fun high concept, and one that works almost entirely on the strength of Campbell's performance.

Miraculously, the television Ash doesn't just feel like a consistent character, but an actual person, who's not only existed in the 24 years off-screen, but has lived while we haven't been

looking. He's supported by two charming new sidekicks – Pablo Bolivar (Ray Santiago) and Kelly Maxwell (Dana DeLorenzo) – whose affection for/tolerance of Ash brings out the best in the character.

Ash is established in a perfect pilot, then sent back to a very familiar location in an astonishing three-part finale. If those episodes had been chainsawed apart and stitched together, we would have had the movie fans have campaigned for since *Army Of Darkness* hit VHS.

Sadly, the episodes between the pilot and finale are more disappointing than finding your girlfriend's decapitated head is still talking to you. Despite each episode having a measly

25-minute runtime, there's a lot of padding and repetition across the season's ten instalments, with one extended dream sequence being the nadir of the franchise as a whole. The practical effects are also a letdown, somehow looking far cheaper in digital than they ever did on 35mm.

Still, *AvED* does enough to make us eagerly anticipate the incoming second season. If that fixes the problems while building on the successes, we'll start campaigning for season three right away.

🔴 **Extras** Impressively, there are cast and crew commentaries on all ten episodes – eight of them featuring Bruce Campbell. "Ash: Inside The World" (16 minutes) strings together short behind-the-scenes pieces (previously available online) on every episode. "How To Kill A Deadite" (two minutes) sees Campbell discuss... well, have a guess. Finally, there's a short "Best Of Ash" montage. **Sam Ashurst**

i In the finale, look for a Freddy Krueger-esque welding glove hanging on a wall – a nod to a similar moment in *Evil Dead II*.



PSYCHOMANIA

Reborn To Be Wild

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★
RELEASED 19 SEPTEMBER
 1973 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD (dual format)
 Director Don Sharp
 Cast Nicky Henson, Mary Larkin, Beryl Reid, George Sanders

❖ **To paraphrase the nuns of** Nonnberg: how do you score a film like *Psychomania*? This zombie biker flick is so deliriously daft, it may be the silliest British horror movie ever made.

Timotei-haired biker Tom (Nicky Henson) discovers the secret of eternal life: kill yourself believing, with absolute certainty, that you'll come back. It works! Soon his gang are following suit, diving off tower blocks and motorway bridges, then embarking on a reign of terror that involves trashing a supermarket cereal aisle. Take that, Sugar Puffs! Add baffling guff about a frog

pendant, a butler who may be Satan (George Sanders, in his last role), and some hilariously bathetic dialogue and you're guaranteed to hoot with derision.

Yet amid the absurdity there are flashes of real quality, like the eerie slow-mo sequences of bikers circling standing stones, and a score which gloriously merges spooky pastoral with Hammond funk. How do you score a film like *Psychomania*? Generously, with gratitude for all the giggles.

➤ **Extras** Three featurettes from a 2010 US release (40 minutes) are bolstered by a new Nicky Henson interview, pieces on the costumes and the remastering, and vintage shorts on Avebury and a biker club (46 minutes), plus trivia subtitles, a trailer and a booklet. **Ian Berriman**

i The bassist on the score was legendary session man Herbie Flowers - who's also on Lou Reed's "Walk On The Wild Side".

ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Back to Blunderland

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★
RELEASED 19 SEPTEMBER
 2016 | PG | Blu-ray 3D/Blu-ray/DVD/download
 Director James Bobin
 Cast Mia Wasikowska, Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Sacha Baron Cohen, Anne Hathaway

❖ **Why did audiences flock to** Tim Burton's terrible *Alice In Wonderland* but desert its sequel, *Alice Through the Looking Glass*? Was it the six-year space in-between films? Was it new, relatively unknown director James Bobin? Or was it simply a case of "once bitten, twice shy"? Whatever the reason, *Looking Glass* is the better film, but it's a ground-grazingly low bar.

Picking up several years after Mia Wasikowska's Alice's last trip, it sees her return to Wonderland marred by the fact that the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp) is dying. This, apparently, is not a good thing, and the only way to save him is to enlist the help of Time - personified here by the film's saving grace, Sacha Baron Cohen.

Cohen is just what Wonderland needed. He's eccentric; he's funny; he has a Werner Herzog accent, for some reason. He sticks out in a

“Cohen is the saving grace”



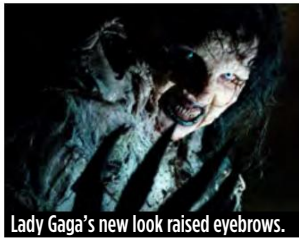
cast that, for all their talents, are still lumbered with playing irritating simpletons. For Cohen and Bobin - who previously collaborated on *Da Ali G Show* - are the new jarring with the old. Visually, Time's clockwork castle - an imaginative, gothic triumph - is far superior to the garish, CGI Wonderland. Sadly it's the old, with its hollow dialogue and

nonsensical plot, that ends up suffocating everything.

➤ **Extras** On DVD: a four-minute featurette on the costumes. The Blu-ray adds commentary from James Bobin, ten deleted scenes, and about 25 minutes' more bits and bobs. **Stephen Kelly**

i During a scene where Alice travels through a time vortex, the music briefly nods to the *Doctor Who* theme tune.

HOME ENTERTAINMENT



Lady Gaga's new look raised eyebrows.

FRIEND REQUEST

Anti-social media

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 19 SEPTEMBER**

2016 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Simon Verhoeven

▶ Cast Alycia Debnam-Carey, William Moseley, Connor Paolo, Brit Morgan

◆ **The best thing about this** identikit horror is that it reminds you it'd be a good idea to delete your Facebook page.

After Laura (*Fear The Walking Dead's* Alycia Debnam-Carey) makes the mistake of clicking "accept" on Marina, the spooky goth girl in her class, obsession, rejection and accusations follow. What initially looks like a *Single White Female* retread takes a supernatural turn after Marina hangs herself, then exacts revenge from beyond the grave...

There are five or six decent jump scares – all accompanied by thunderous chords, natch – and one decent idea: that a laptop screen can act as a "black mirror" used in witches' rituals. Hmm, do you think someone read a Charlie Brooker interview where he explained the title of his anthology show?

Think of a J-horror remake with a side order of *Elm Street* (weird dreams) and a splash of *Candyman* (for bees, substitute CGI wasps). 2014 found-footage flick *Unfriended* explored very similar territory – public shaming, our thirst for approval – with greater urgency and ingenuity. And the way that the lonely, self-harming Marina fulfils every negative stereotype about teenage social misfits leaves a bit of a sour taste.

◆ **Extras** None. **Ian Berriman**

◆ At one point, there's an internet search for "black mirror", and it auto-completes to "Black Mirror season 3".



The Countryside Alliance got nasty.

THE WALKING DEAD Season Six

Begin The Negan

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 26 SEPTEMBER**

2015-2016 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Showrunner Scott M Gimple

▶ Cast Andrew Lincoln, Norman Reedus, Stephen Yeun, Danai Gurira

◆ **The Walking Dead's sixth** outing is the show in microcosm – lengthy runs of episodes where nothing much happens, punctuated by short bursts of two or three sublime instalments.

When this season is good it's knot-in-your-stomach amazing – Rick and co's efforts to redirect a zombie horde in the first three episodes are an ingenious and beautifully constructed piece of storytelling, while mid-season premiere "No Way Out" contains a sucker punch so visceral it takes you hours to recover. Unfortunately, such standout moments don't come often enough.

There's no doubt that the series plays to its strengths – amazingly inventive zombie stunts; a willingness to mess around with the *Walking Dead* formula;

embracing the most violent soap opera in history – yet there's something not quite right here. This year the show has become self-aware, and over-reliant on playing around with storylines viewers *think* they know from the comics. The faux character death that wound up the internet, the protracted build-up to uber-villain Negan's arrival, and the headline-grabbing (yet dramatically unsatisfying) cliffhanger finale all feel like writers playing games with the audience – and it's to the show's detriment. Hopefully season seven will embrace the element of surprise again.

◆ **Extras** Seven episode commentaries and four deleted scenes (seven minutes), plus featurettes like the in-depth "Inside The Walking Dead" (70 minutes) and "The Making Of The Walking Dead" (55 minutes). The Blu-ray comes with a longer version of the finale. **Richard Edwards**

◆ As part of a prank war, Norman Reedus filled the air vents on Andrew Lincoln's car with glitter. See bit.ly/WDglitter.



Unfortunately the fruit bowl had shrunk.

SLEEPER

Waking up with a Woody

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 3 OCTOBER**

1973 | PG | Blu-ray

▶ Director Woody Allen

▶ Cast Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, John Beck, Mary Gregory

▶ **BLU-RAY DEBUT** **Woody Allen**

may well be cinema's greatest living writer-director but he's only made one full-blown science fiction film. Thankfully, *Sleeper* is a corker.

Allen is perfect as Miles Monroe, the owner of a health food store who goes into hospital for a minor operation in 1973 and comes out 200 years later after being cryogenically frozen. In 2173 he's pitched into the fight against a police state, and soon teams up with socialite Luna (a wonderful Diane Keaton) to infiltrate the mysterious Aries Project.

Despite its futuristic setting, the film says so much about the 1970s, that decade of quality cinema in which it was made – there are references to Watergate, Miss World and more, but it hasn't dated. Perhaps that's because there's so much of *everything* in here: slapstick almost as sublime as Laurel and Hardy's, spot-on introspection, immortal one-liners, striking architecture and visuals, a witty jazz score, crazy comedy, cerebral comedy, satire, surrealism, sex orbs, giant celery...

The work of a great artist who was maturing rapidly around this time, *Sleeper* is a fine achievement in both sci-fi and comedy.

◆ **Extras** Trailer. **Russell Lewin**

◆ The voice of the medical computer in the final scene was provided by Douglas Rain – HAL in 2001.



Gotta love the *Saw* movies...

DOCTOR WHO: THE MOVIE

Sealed With A Kiss

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 19 SEPTEMBER

1996 | 12 | Blu-ray

▶ Director Geoffrey Sax

▶ Cast Paul McGann, Daphne Ashbrook, Eric Roberts, Yee Jee Tso

BLU-RAY DEBUT Once it was *Doctor*

Who: The TV Movie, a title that reeked of glossy American dramas about alcoholic widows. Now it's quietly been upgraded to *Doctor Who: The Movie*, though it was never intended for cinemas.

Whatever you choose to call it, this American-made one-off stubbornly remains an odd, transatlantic curio. Now on Blu-ray – though this is just an upscale of the existing print, not a full remaster – it can still impress.

Geoffrey Sax directs with real panache – *Who* has never looked so gorgeous – and Paul McGann's boyish whirlwind of a Doctor, all curls and velvet and impulsive snogs, remains an intoxicating take on the Time Lord.

▶ **Extras** This double-disc set recycles the extras from the 2010 special edition DVD. Highlights include two commentaries (one with McGann and McCoy), "The Wilderness Years" – an excellent documentary on *Who*'s absence from our screens – and McGann's screen test. New to this release is 50th anniversary treat "The Night Of The Doctor". **Nick Setchfield**

i A proper Blu-ray remaster of the TV movie would be tricky: as it was edited on video, the effects would have to be redone.



Karl's optician was truly hopeless.

SLUGS

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 26 SEPTEMBER

1988 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

BLU-RAY DEBUT After birds, sharks, bees and rats comes the terrifying prospect of the gardener's worst enemy "attacking" a town, which at least leads to some tasty gore amidst the bad dubbing and amusingly OTT score.

Based on Shaun Hutson's 1982 novel, it's delightfully terrible – the risible acting, dialogue and editing will have all but trash movie fans reaching for the slug pellets.

▶ **Extras** Two commentaries (one by Hutson); four interviews; promo reel; trailer; booklet. **Russell Lewin**



He'd overdone the Lynx.

VAMPYRES

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

2015 | 18 | DVD

▶ **A remake of José Larraz's** 1974 cult British horror film, this is, if anything, even more parsimonious than the original. And not as good either.

Two voluptuous female vampires still butcher anyone who comes near their remote dwelling, but missing the strange, heady charge of its parent this new version comes across as vacuous and pointless. A descent into torture porn flags up its redundancy.

▶ **Extras** A Making Of (13 minutes); interview with cast member Caroline Munro (four mins); teaser; trailer. **Russell Lewin**



Trivial Pursuit got wildly out of hand.

SATAN'S BLOOD

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 19 SEPTEMBER

1978 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ **This cheap 'n' sleazy** Spanish horror starts intriguingly, when one couple are enticed to a remote house by another they've only just met.

When the pair turn out to be satanists, this means lots of nakedness (naturally) and creepy stuff as well – like a sinister doll that keeps reappearing. But the plot, having nowhere much to go, soon stops making sense. Still, those with a penchant for the similar films of José "Vampyres" Larraz should be entertained. The filthbuckets.

▶ **Extras** None. **Russell Lewin**



Regis – Reg to his mates.

KINGSGLAIVE: FINAL FANTASY XV

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

2016 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ **Intended to set the scene** for this year's *Final Fantasy* game, *Kingsglave* is torn between its role as jigsaw piece and self-contained yarn.

When it focuses on Sean Bean's king and his teleporting bodyguards, the action barrels along. But stodgy exposition is enough to slow even the nimblest warriors, with the script often resembling a *FF XV* Wikipedia entry.

▶ **Extras** Featurettes on the CGI, voice cast, music and art design. **Matthew Castle**

HOME ENTERTAINMENT



"Let me out of this greenhouse!"

WITCHCRAFT

Chaney old score massacre

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 26 SEPTEMBER

1964 | 12 | DVD

▶ Director Don Sharp

▶ Cast Lon Chaney Jr, Jack Hedley, Jill Dixon, Viola Keats

◆ **For fans of vintage horror**, this unimaginatively-titled effort has numerous points of interest. The cast includes original Wolfman Lon Chaney Jr. The plot recalls Mario Bava classic *Mask Of Satan*. And director Don Sharp also helmed films like *Psychomania*. Sadly, it's a pretty tepid affair.

The Lanier and Whitlock families have been enemies for 300 years, since the Laniers dabbled in Vanessa Whitlock as a witch. Now the feud comes to the boil as redevelopment sees her grave bulldozed, releasing her to wreak revenge.

The cinematography's attractive, and the mute, unblinking Vanessa is a menacing presence. Her MO doesn't exactly scream 17th century, though; twice she tries to dispatch Laniers by bewitching them into driving their cars into a rubbish tip. An across-the-divide love affair subplot is drearily drippy. And the script seems uncertain whether the focus is its mysteriously resurrected witch or a Whitlock family covenant; somewhat bewilderingly, the two have practically nothing to do with one another.

◆ **Extras** Interviews with the composer and the continuity person; trailer; an episode of Chaney-fronted anthology show *13 Demon Street*. **Ian Berriman**

Don Sharp remembered Chaney Jr as a very lonely man, with a drink problem. "After lunch it was very difficult..."



Gaga and Tony Bennett: wadda duo!

AMERICAN HORROR STORY: HOTEL

Pretty Vacant

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 3 OCTOBER

2015 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD/download

▶ Creator Ryan Murphy

▶ Cast Lady Gaga, Sarah Paulson, Kathy Bates, Angela Bassett

◆ **American Horror Story: Hotel** isn't for everyone. As a franchise, *AHS*'s only consistency is its inconsistency, and *Hotel*'s even more all-over-the-place than usual. It's almost as if the soul of the hotel setting has possessed the narrative, throwing in transient characters and overnight ideas, creating a plot as varied and disconnected as a B&B guestbook.

The closest thing to a main narrative revolves around Detective John Lowe (Wes Bentley) and his search for the identity of a mysterious killer who is linked to LA's Hotel Cortez, a place with its own dark past, present and future.

But that set-up is misleading. Despite the *Shining* references, this *Hotel*'s more overcooked than the *Overlook*, with ghosts, vampires, evil babies and blaxploitation

clichés running around its halls.

When the show works, it's fantastic – with one-off episodes such as "Devil's Night" (famous serial killers meet for dinner) and "Flicker" (backstory of Lady Gaga's Countess character) stand-outs. And there's a reason this show is consistently nominated for Golden Globes for acting: the performances are astonishing, with Evan Peters' serial killer ghost Mr March and Denis O'Hare's transgender bartender Liz particularly worthy of praise. These performances equal the best of both actors' careers, but they feel like they're in completely different shows.

So, while *Hotel* may be as soulless as a stay on the Las Vegas Strip, it's still worth a visit. You just wouldn't want to live there...

◆ **Extras** Two short featurettes: one looks at the Cortez set, while the other goes behind the scenes on "Devil's Night". **Sam Ashurst**

Gaga marked her first week's filming with a party. She had black lace curtains hung, and her swimming pool dyed blood red...



"Sign your Carry On Screaming DVD?"

WORST FEARS

Tales Of The Underfunded

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

2016 | 18 | DVD

▶ Director Keith Claxton

▶ Cast Fenella Fielding, Victor Spinetti, Rebecca Santos, Anna Wing

◆ **There's an acknowledged** debt to classic Amicus movies in this cheerfully bloody portmanteau of horror shorts.

Produced by screenwriter and journalist David McGillivray, who links the seven tales in the guise of a music hall master of ceremonies, it mixes outright black comedy – middle-class witches dispatch a seaside town's inhabitants in gruesome fashion – with Dahl-style murder fables.

It's low-rent stuff but ambitious: *In The Place Of The Dead*, the most assured entry, is shot on location in Marrakesh, the camcorder aesthetics giving a real immediacy to the location. A final, satanic shocker is filmed in the south of France, its tone recalling McGillivray's work as Sleazemaster General on such '70s fare as *House Of Whipcord*.

It's all clearly made on the fly for a pittance, but there's a verve to the storytelling and a wicked, winking relish for an old-school shudder that keeps you entertained.

◆ **Extras** "Horror Icon", a caustic mockumentary about McGillivray's career (with deleted scenes, blooper reel and an intro); "Facing His Fears", in which McGillivray talks us through the film's creation; gallery; trailer; booklet.

Nick Setchfield

Story six, *After Image*, is written by Andrew Cartmel, script editor of *Doctor Who* in the Sylvester McCoy era.

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HOME ENTERTAINMENT

The new face of Cadbury's Flake was unexpected.



MATINEE

Castle's in the air

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1993 | PG | Blu-ray & DVD (dual-format)

▶ Director Joe Dante

▶ Cast John Goodman, Cathy Moriarty, Simon Fenton, Omri Katz

BLU-RAY DEBUT Ever happily

wasted time browsing '50s sci-fi trailers on YouTube? Then Joe Dante's nostalgia-fest should give you a warm glow.

Set in Florida in 1962, at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it follows monster-mad kid Gene as cigar-chomping showman Lawrence Woolsey (John Goodman) arrives in town to promote his latest atom-age shocker *Mant!*.

With Woolsey a stand-in for self-publicising Hollywood hucksters like William Castle, it's a film that celebrates a long-lost world of lurid front-of-house standees and shameless

gimmickry. The period is lovingly evoked, with all the right clothes, cars and pop hits. And the glimpses of *Mant!* are hilariously well-observed spoofery.

All that's missing is a compelling storyline, instead of an accumulation of minor incident. Considering that Gene's dad is away helping blockade the Russkies, it's a film of surprisingly little emotional impact. Slight, then... but still utterly charming.

▶ **Extras** Two featurettes quiz firstly Dante-regular actors, then the DOP and editor on working with him (18 minutes); 31-minute chat with Dante; *Mant!* in full (16 minutes), with intro; eight minutes of timecoded behind-the-scenes footage; a vintage promo; a trailer; booklet. **Ian Berriman**

i "Lawrence Woolsey" is a nod to Lawrence Woolner, co-owner of the company that distributed *Attack Of The 50 Foot Woman*.

THE FLASH Season Two

Saviour of the multiverse!

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015-2016 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Showrunner Andrew Kreisberg

▶ Cast Grant Gustin, Candice Patton, Danielle Panabaker, Carlos Valdes

▶ **Season two of *The Flash*** embraces the concept of multiple realities so crucial to the DC comics universe and – ahem – “runs” with it. The result is hokey sci-fi bunkum of the highest order. But hugely entertaining sci-fi bunkum that, like season one, manages to sell this nonsense through vibrant characters and acting that's way beyond the call of duty. Barry cries a lot in the last few episodes; it takes an actor like Grant Gustin to nail that without making him look wet.

This time round Team Flash faces Zoom, a villainous speedster from Earth 2 voiced by Candyman

Tony Todd. He's hotly pursued by Earth 2's tin-helmeted Flash, Jay Garrick (no spoilers here!) and an inspired alternate version of Harrison Wells, who turns surly sarcasm into high art. Joe West's estranged son Wally and Wells' daughter Jesse join the mix too, teasing more speedsters to come. Cisco develops powers. Iris gets a new boyfriend. There's a fabulous, epic two-part set on Earth 2 (aka Instagram filter world) and a doesn't-quite-come-off *Arrow/Legends Of Tomorrow* crossover. Plus a glorious standalone monster-of-the-week romp featuring the return of Killer Shark.

There's an annoying over-reliance on technobabble revelations and solutions; a few twists make little sense; and Zoom, after a powerful first half of the season, devolves into a woefully one-dimensional rant with a



ludicrous evil goal. But mostly, *The Flash* season two is huge fun, packed with fan-baiting Easter eggs and occasionally genuinely touching – especially the surreal and melancholic episode directed by Kevin Smith.

▶ **Extras** The main draw here is “Chasing Flash”, a 50-minute doc following guest director Kevin Smith's Flash “journey”; expect

fanboy geeking-out. You also get numerous short behind-the-scenes featurettes; character-based pieces on Hawkman and Hawkgirl, Vandal Savage and Zoom (28 minutes); 16 deleted scenes; last year's Comic-Con and Paleyfest panels; and a gag reel. **Dave Golder**

i Kevin Smith reckons his directing work on “The Runaway Dinosaur” was the best he's ever done. He'll be back for season three.



Someone tell that sheet of paper to move!

DEAD END DRIVE-IN

The Prisoner Of Fender

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 19 SEPTEMBER**

1987 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director **Brian Trenchard-Smith**

▶ Cast **Ned Manning, Natalie**

McCurry, Peter Whitford, Ollie Hall

❖ **Dead End Drive-In** may look like a parade of garish '80s B-movie tropes, but it's smarter – and weirder – than that.

Global recession has left the world in poverty. Crime is surging and gangs of Quincys Punks roam the streets. Jimmy (Ned Manning) borrows his brother's Chevy to take Carmen (Natalie McCurry) to the old Star Drive-In – but the pair soon find themselves trapped inside the parking lot, which is in fact a concentration camp. While Carmen settles into an easy life of partying, Jimmy determines to break out.

Think *The Prisoner* with *Mad Max* fashion and drag racers instead of blazers and Mini Mokes and you're close to the tone. The acting and dialogue are all over the place, but director Brian Trenchard-Smith bathes the film in neon lights and amber Australian sunsets, making for a visual treat that also has something to say about how poverty and racism affect society.

❖ **Extras** An entertaining commentary from director Brian Trenchard-Smith, plus his 1973 documentary "The Stuntmen" and public information film "Hospitals Don't Burn Down!". There's also a trailer and a gallery. **Will Salmon**

i One impressive stunt set the then world record for a jump by a truck, with it reaching a whopping 162 feet.



Three men who Simon Pegg likes.

STAR TREK 50th Anniversary TV & Movie Coll Final Frontier – Blu-ray boxset

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1966-1991 | 12 | Blu-ray

▶ Creator **Gene Roddenberry**

▶ Cast **William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy,**

DeForest Kelley, James Doohan

❖ **Three cheers, everyone: Kirk** and co just marked their half-century! But Paramount don't just want you to raise your glasses – they want you to open your wallets.

Featuring all the Shatner-crew episodes and films, across 30 Blu-ray discs the *50th Anniversary TV And Movie Collection* provides several incentives to double (or triple) dip. Firstly: the HD debut of the 1973-74 *Animated Series*, now remastered. No review discs, so we can't comment on picture quality, but the show itself, though crudely

“Several incentives to double (or triple) dip”

made, is unfairly overlooked. It features fan-pleasing returns for characters like Harry Mudd, and the medium allows for outlandish fun like thistle-headed plant people and giant slugs.

Secondly: the *Wrath Of Khan* Director's Cut – only recently released on Blu. Reinstating a few trims, it's arguably inessential, but a nice thing to have. Thirdly...

❖ **Extras** Documentary "The Journey To The Silver Screen" (146 minutes) is an absorbing, in-depth look at films I-VI. There's much input from writer/director Nicholas Meyer, who's candid and droll. And a lot of space is made for fan experts to discuss variant drafts and pitches that never came to fruition. Even hardcore Trekkers should learn something.

Old extras are also carried over, plus you get six movie "mini-posters" by artist Juan Ortiz. Only own this lot on DVD? Buy it! Own just a few on Blu? Wishlist for Crimbo, maybe? **Ian Berriman**

i Buy the box set from Amazon and you get one more little bonus: a 50th anniversary Starfleet insignia pin badge.

(ROUND UP)



THE MARTIAN:

EXTENDED EDITION

(3 October, Blu-ray/DVD) adds ten minutes to Ridley Scott's astronaut-in-peril not-really-a-comedy, but these minor scene extensions and character moments don't amount to much. The improved extras now include commentary by Scott, the writer, and the author of the novel; a six-part Making Of (four are new); three deleted scenes; and over two hours of Mars chat with NASA types.

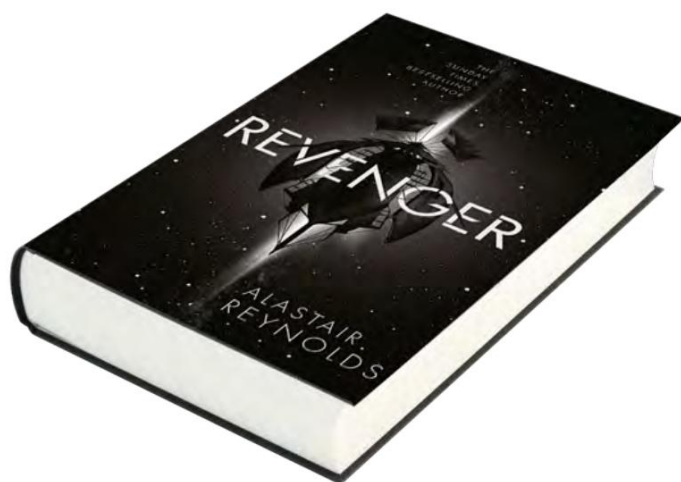
12 MONKEYS SEASON

TWO (3 October, Blu-ray/DVD) offers more fiendish but joyless time travel paradoxes, with TV's glummiest cast trying to prevent evil forces changing the timeline to create a red-forested utopia where all of time exists at once. Less sci-fi and more temporal fantasy, it occasionally produces intriguing episodes, but overall it's an overload of overwrought plotting.

SLEEPY HOLLOW

SEASON THREE (19 September, DVD) really should have signalled the end for all concerned – especially given its controversial finale.

Somehow it's limping into a fourth year, but you may want to consider this its swansong. Alas, it's a rather average one, with villain Pandora about as threatening as a damp bag of marshmallows. Finally, we jumped the gun with our review of ITV six-parter **THE FRANKENSTEIN CHRONICLES** (3 October, Blu-ray/DVD). Doh! See issue 271 for a lengthy appraisal, but in a nutshell: "Rather good, sitting somewhere between a period *True Detective* and *Penny Dreadful* ... A valiant effort to put a fresh spin on a well-worn tale." ★★★★★



REVENGER

Original Pirate Material



► **RELEASED 15 SEPTEMBER**
432 pages | Hardback/ebook/audiobook
► Author Alastair Reynolds
► Publisher Gollancz

◆ **Now this is fun.** Having lately finished a family saga that traces humankind's first expansion beyond the solar system with his *Poseidon's Children* trilogy and, in the company of Stephen Baxter, conjured up the spirit of Arthur C Clarke for *The Medusa Chronicles* – both projects that required a certain rigour – it seems Alastair Reynolds is in the mood to cut loose. To put that another way: *Revenger* is about pirates in space.

If this brings forth images of *Firefly* or SF from the Golden Age, then that's entirely apposite, because Reynolds's new novel is packed full of adventure, good and not-so-good people working together to deal with bad situations, and the kind of space battles where ships have to be boarded and taken in hand-to-hand combat.

It's a tale narrated by Arafura Ness, a teenager brought up on a backwater planet. Raised by a conservative father who worries about maintaining a position in

society he can't really afford following financial setbacks, her life is stultifying. But then both Arafura and her rebellious elder sister, Adrana, discover they have a talent for "bone reading", operating a communications system based on mysterious alien technology.

Before you can say, "That's a bit Robert Louis Stevenson", the duo have run away to join a ship skippered by Captain Rackamore, a man who makes his living by flying to "baubles" – booby-trapped worldlets where, for those who know how to get in and out without getting killed or trapped in the process, there are valuable and ancient alien artefacts to be scavenged. And there are plenty of baubles to be found, because the universe Reynolds imagines here is a place where civilisations have risen and fallen for so long that what's left is a kind of cosmic

“Not his best book, but his most enjoyable”

junkyard. As with Reynolds's steampunk novel *Terminal World*, there's a sense of history weighing down on *Revenger's* characters. But it's not just existential dread that grips Arafura. On her first mission out, things go badly awry when Rackamore and his crew encounter a near-mythical villainess. Suffice to say we're not just talking pirates in space, but *eldritch* pirates in space. And, as the title suggests, a girl out for vengeance.

If this is all sounding a bit hokey, it's probably worth bearing in mind that *Revenger* is being sold on Amazon as a Young Adult novel. It's accordingly a much more straightforward book than, say, *Revelation Space* or its sequels. But that's not to say Reynolds in any way writes down to his audience. Instead, he makes a virtue of needing to keep his narrative straightforward and his storytelling crisp by using the space this creates to focus in on character.

In particular, Arafura emerges from these pages as vibrant and wholly believable. This is no mean trick, because Reynolds alters her voice over the course of the book, so that she begins by speaking in a rather prim fashion but, by way of some sly jokes about how we all disguise ourselves to fit in, ends the book talking like a proper buccaneer. That Arafura's emotional journey is just as convincing as we follow her coming of age in terrible circumstances says much about the quality of Reynolds' prose.

If you were going to be critical, you'd say that Reynolds might have been a little too influenced by *Serenity* when it comes to some of the book's more gothic flourishes, but mostly you'll likely be too busy reading just one more chapter to notice. More seriously, this isn't by any means Reynolds's best book – if "best" means exploring big philosophical ideas and big science. However, it's by far the most *enjoyable* book Reynolds has ever written. We await the sequels signposted at the end impatiently.

Jonathan Wright

i Alastair Reynolds's next book will be an as-yet-untilled sequel to *The Prefect*, set in his *Revelation Space* universe.



CHASING EMBERS

It's not easy being Red



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**
420 pages | Paperback/ebook
► Author James Bennett
► Publisher Orbit

◆ **It's quite unusual for a** novel to have a dragon as a hero. Luckily for "Red Ben" Garston, he's able to shift into the shape of a human, making it rather easier to romance "damsels", which is helpful as he's the last of his kind – the last awake, that is. James Bennett has created a world in which under a medieval agreement, almost all the supernatural creatures on Earth have been put into a long sleep, leaving only one of each awake. These "remnants" are to be left in peace. So when someone does wake another dragon, Ben needs to work out who, and why, before his enemies decide to be done with him once and for all.

The plot of *Chasing Embers* feels thin, with a lot of chasing and fighting across three continents, from New York to London, Germany to Egypt, but not masses of complexity. Likewise some of the side characters feel undeveloped and stereotypical. However, Bennett has done an extremely good job of creating some detailed and believable characters, from Ben himself – who, even in human form, can't escape thinking like a dragon – to Rose, who refuses to play the damsel, to Khadra, the Somali child who takes desperate steps in a tough situation. They all deserve a stronger plot. **Miriam McDonald**

i Bennett says the book took about a year and a half to write, with another six months of editing and rewriting.



THE MIGHTY ONE

Thrill-powered memoir



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

320 pages | Paperback

► Author Steve MacManus

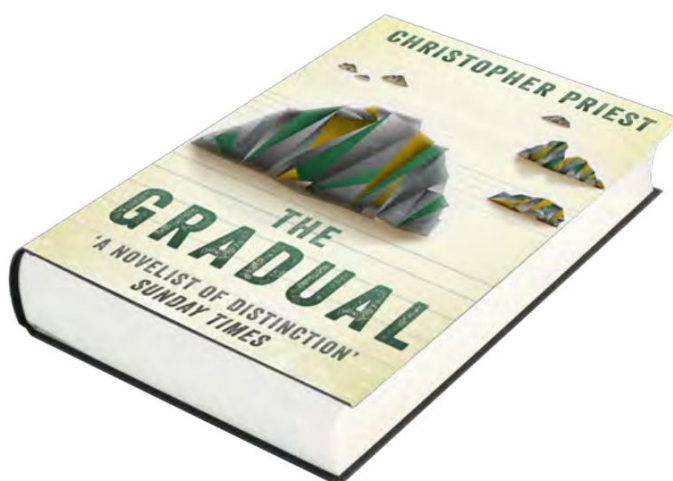
► Publisher 2000 AD

◀ **Debuting a full 10 months** before *Star Wars* arrived in the UK, *2000 AD* was the brainchild of a forward-thinking staffer in Fleetway Publications' competitions department who had seen the Empire looming over the horizon. Landing, according to *The Guardian*, "like a thermo-nuclear bomb" in the British comics landscape, the sci-fi anthology mag promised "tomorrow's thrills today" to an expectant generation.

Unexpectedly inheriting the title when the previous editor walked out, Steve MacManus guided the adventures of Judge Dredd, Strontium Dog and co through most of the '80s, when his direct reports included the likes of Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman and Grant Morrison.

This entertaining memoir (subtitled *My Life Inside The Nerve Centre*) is cheerily evocative of the era of Cow Gum and rub-down transfers. Explosive action is largely confined to the strips, which MacManus discusses with the enthusiasm of a true comics evangelist. Behind the scenes, it's all office politics, pay grades and production deadlines, but MacManus has a lively eye for detail, and aficionados will lap up such insightful minutiae about a title that's still bringing us tomorrow's thrills, even today. **Paul Kirkley**

i MacManus was once interviewed by Paula Yates on Channel 4's *The Tube*, while dressed as ed Tharg the Mighty.



THE GRADUAL

Orthodox Priest?



► **RELEASED 15 SEPTEMBER**

352 pages | Hardback/ebook

► Author Christopher Priest

► Publisher Gollancz

◀ **If not quite adrift in time**, Alesandro Sussken has distinct problems keeping track of the hours and days. That's because he's a traveller in the Dream Archipelago, a chain of islands that defy attempts to map them. Take a journey that, in experienced time, takes weeks, and months and years pass for those back at home.

Sussken, a successful composer, has good reasons to want to travel. As a resident of a fascist state that, with echoes of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is constantly at war, he finds the authorities closing in on him – albeit that his problems with the regime are of a rather unusual kind: it wants to employ his music in the service of the state.

For Christopher Priest aficionados, both the setting and

the unsettling set-up will be familiar. As, to use a handy shorthand, a slipstream novelist who draws as much on magical realism as SF, he's long offered readers narratives where the nature of reality itself is uncertain.

That said, as Priest himself has noted in a blog post, this is in many respects a more conventional work than other recent offerings, a book driven by "a straightforward narrative told in sequence". It makes *The Gradual* one of Priest's most approachable novels.

It also has a warmth that's far less evident in many of Priest's earlier books. That's because a key theme is the way we experience time, the way our older selves can connect vividly with something that happened years ago. Tied up with this is an exploration of our relationships with those closest to us. As Sussken becomes "adept" at moving through life, these become, if not easier, somehow sweeter and clearer. Or perhaps it's just that we give up fighting with lovers and siblings as we draw closer to death? Priest, incidentally, is 73.

A novel that may well invade your own dreams, both in good ways and bad. **Jonathan Wright**

“One of Priest's most approachable novels”

i Priest was driving through Hungerford at the time of the 1987 massacre. He only found out about it an hour or so later.



AGE OF HEROES

Demigod detection



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

416 pages | Paperback/ebook

► Author James Lovegrove

► Publisher Solaris

◀ **As with the other novels in** James Lovegrove's *Pantheon* series (this is the seventh), *Age Of Heroes* is designed to be readable as a standalone. Like the author's *Age Of Zeus*, it's a modern-day take on Greco-Roman myth. But in its variant reality, Zeus and the other gods vanished millennia ago, leaving their demigod offspring – the legendary part-human heroes like Heracles and Odysseus – to live on immortally into the 21st century. Now they lead more or less normal lives under false names, their divinity unsuspected by ordinary humans... until someone finds the means to start bumping them off one by one. Two former heroes set out to find the culprits.

Despite an extremely basic plot and much plodding exposition, this is a rather likeable book, mainly for its suggestions of where the heroes of antiquity would have ended up. Orpheus is a debauched Mick Jagger-style rock legend, Heracles is a masked Mexican wrestler, and the central character Theo (Theseus) is a Manhattan crime novelist who secretly misses fighting evil for real. The lively story hops all round the world, and the whodunit aspects benefit from some sly authorial misdirection.

Andrew Osmond

i Next for Lovegrove: the Lovecraft/Conan-Doyle-meshing *Sherlock Holmes And The Shadwell Shadows*.

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BLOOMSBURY

The hallway of
Bleak House.



AT HOME WITH MONSTERS

Making an exhibition of himself



► RELEASED OUT NOW!

151 pages | Hardback

► Editors Britt Salvesen, Jim Shedden,
Matthew Welch

► Publisher Titan Books

❖ Not many people have their collections dignified by exhibition in a museum – curators haven't been lining up to loan our *Doctor Who* Weetabix cards. But it's a little different when you're Guillermo del Toro, whose collection's so vast much of it's now housed in a building dubbed Bleak House.

Now a collaboration between museums in LA, Ontario and Minneapolis has imported del Toro's gothic gewgaws into the academy, setting them alongside the sort of art that's fired his imagination. This slim companion volume features contextualising essays on collecting and ideas of



1778 etching
"Enrag'd Monster".

the monstrous; a thoughtful interview on his philosophy of cinema; and a gallery that juxtaposes, say, *Blade 2* concept art with an 18th century etching.

At times you can't help feeling we're taking, say, a fiftysomething fanboy's Frankenstein figurines a little too seriously. And are we looking at key works that inspired him, or just ones that happened to belong to the museums involved? All but the most completist fans can stick with *Guillermo del Toro's Cabinet Of Curiosities* (2013), which covers much the same ground. **Ian Berriman**

“Are we
looking at
key works?”

i Coming soon (due 21 Oct): *Guillermo del Toro's Pan's Labyrinth*, a tenth anniversary making of book featuring removable items.

Reviews



FORSAKEN SKIES

Seven Samurai in space



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

570 pages | Paperback/ebook

► Author D Nolan Clark

► Publisher Orbit

◆ **Fermi's paradox asks why**, when alien life must surely be an inevitability, and the universe is billions of years old, Earth hasn't already been visited by some form of extra-terrestrial. In *Forsaken Skies*, humanity has been exploring the stars for hundreds of years, with no sign of aliens. The conclusion is that they don't exist, and the whole concept is now considered absurd. But then something comes along that's entirely outside the Navy's range of experience...

The planet Niraya is under attack, and the corporation responsible for its welfare has written it off, determining it cheaper to simply let it – and its inhabitants – die. Fortunately for them, Aleister Lanoe, a retired and renowned Navy commander, is in the right place at the right time, and brings together a ragtag collection of pilots, con men and fugitives to defend the planet. It's a tiny group against a huge invading force – but it might just work.

It's not an original premise, but gripping writing, a brilliantly realised future culture and sympathetic characters – Ehta, a former pilot suffering from PTSD, and Valk, who lives in constant pain and never leaves his spacesuit, are particular highlights – make this an entertaining and compelling read. **Rhian Drinkwater**

i "D Nolan Clark" is a pseudonym for David Wellington, perhaps best known for his *Monster Island* zombie trilogy.

BULLET TIME A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS



WHOGRAPICA

► **RELEASED**

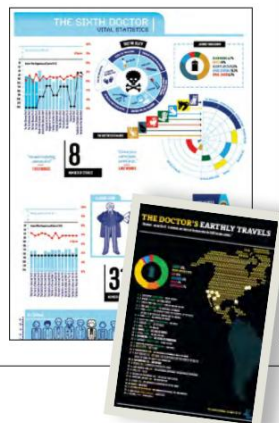
22 SEPTEMBER

221 pages | Hardback

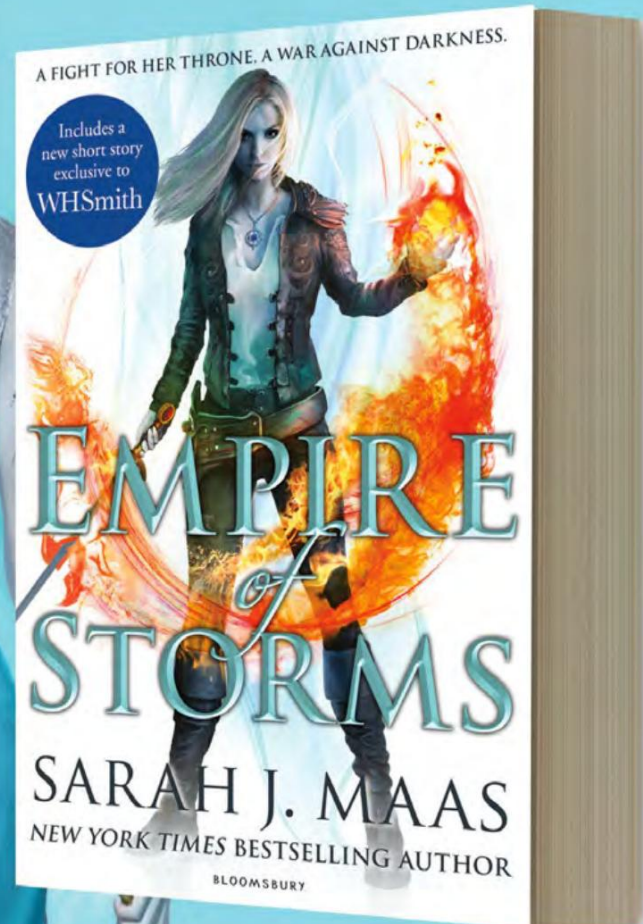
► Authors Steve O'Brien, Simon Guerrier, Ben Morris

► Publisher BBC Books

- **A Doctor Who infographics book!** (Though not the first: we should give a mention to 2013 indie title *Time & Space Visualiser*.)
- Hugely colourful, using a wide range of devices – Venn diagrams, maps, word clouds, cutesy avatars – it looks absolutely gorgeous.
- Best bits: the "vital statistics" on each Doctor: ratings, catchphrase use, costumes and so on.
- Frequently witty, which helps prevent things getting too dry.
- Rewarding when crunching data in a way that's revealing, like showing production credits for women, or graphing ratings against timeslot.
- Stumbles occasionally with the likes of "when each letter first appeared in an episode title". The sheer pointlessness will amuse some, but it still seems... well, pointless.



BLOOD WILL RUN.
DREAMS WILL SHATTER.
AN ARMY MUST RISE.



'CELAENA IS AS MUCH
AN EPIC HERO AS FRODO
OR JON SNOW'

BESTSELLING AUTHOR
TAMORA PIERCE

AVAILABLE AT

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SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

BLOOMSBURY

REISSUES

Titles getting another runout in paperback this month include Liu Cixin's 15-story collection

THE PAPER MENAGERIE (★★★★★, out now, Head Of Zeus). Some of the



more experimental, whimsical pieces test one's patience; elsewhere Cixin tackles

cyberpunk noir or draws on "fox spirit" mythology. We said: "Uneven – but when he's good, Liu is very, very good indeed."

Author William Gay died in 2012, leaving behind **LITTLE SISTER DEATH** (★★★★★, out now, Faber & Faber). This ghost story set in rural Tennessee in the early '80s centres on an author who, seeking inspiration, moves his family to a haunted farm.



What a plonker. We said: "Lands somewhere between Stephen King, Cormac McCarthy and *Blair Witch*... Positively thrums with a dark, witchy power." With Halloween coming there's a veritable avalanche of classic horror reissues in October.

Highlights include three collections: Ray Russell's **HAUNTED CASTLES**

(6 October, Penguin Classics), which includes the tale that inspired William Castle film *Mr Sardonicus*; *Mapp And Lucia* author EF Benson's

GHOST STORIES of (6 October, Vintage Classics), selected and introduced by Mark Gatiss; and *Five Children And It* creator E Nesbit's

HORROR STORIES (29 September, Penguin). The latter is just one of five



titles in the new Penguin Worlds range, which also includes novels by Emma Bull, John

Christopher, Joanna Russ and Vernor Vinge – all of them intriguing choices.



THE GRACES

Cooler witches ever

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

421 pages | Paperback/ebook

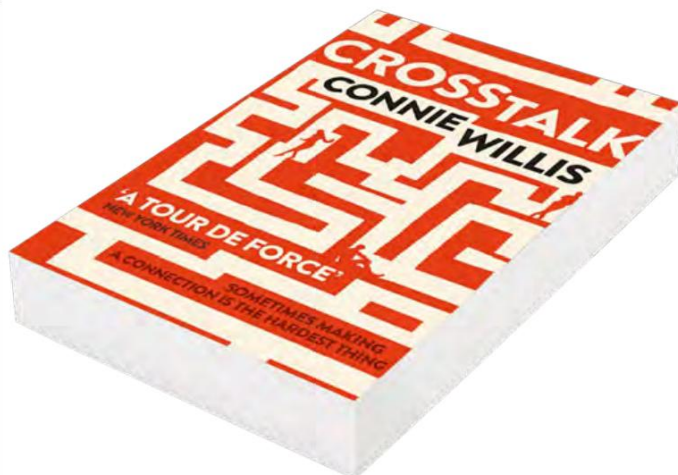
► Author Laure Eve

► Publisher Faber & Faber

❖ **The first quarter of *The Graces*** is an angsty, school-set YA-by-numbers. It's narrated by an outsider teenage girl who has no friends and feels "different"; her mum doesn't understand her; she's fascinated by three cool siblings who, so the school rumour-mill has it, might be witches; and she has a monumental crush on one of them. The Grace family even have pretentious names (Summer, Fenrin, Thalia). Our narrator is named River. You could play bingo with the clichés here.

However, once River befriends the Graces, you'll be happy to discover that the clichés become less important. You get caught up in the mystery: are they really witches? What are they up to? Then, after you've been reading for a while, you suddenly realise that these people feel like living, breathing human beings. Author Laure Eve has injected personalities into characters who in less-certain hands would be cyphers; they feel as real as you are, truly and completely three-dimensional. And everything about them is as magnetic as the North Pole, too – they're so different; you'll end the book wishing you knew them. Add to this a series of twists that slowly but surely build to a stunning climax and boy, is this a treat. **Jayne Nelson**

i Live near Uxbridge? On 22 October, Eve will be talking all things witches at Young Adult festival YA Shot.



CROSSTALK

Connect Flaw

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 15 SEPTEMBER**

495 pages | Paperback/ebook

► Author Connie Willis

► Publisher Del Rey Books

❖ **How many ways could you** contact a partner from your phone, right now? Between email, text, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and, you know, actually ringing them, you've probably got at least six different options. But what if you didn't need any of them? What if you could connect to them through your emotions?

That's the terrifying technology that's changing the world in Hugo winner Connie Willis's latest novel: after minor brain surgery, couples can transmit their feelings to one another via electronic implants. In theory, it's sweet. In practice? Well, it has some worrying side effects, especially for *Crosstalk*'s heroine, Briddey. Because when she comes round from surgery, Briddey finds herself

connected not to her boyfriend but to the weird guy who works in the basement. And things are about to get even stranger...

There's a lot going on in *Crosstalk*. Sometimes it's a sci-fi flavoured thriller, as Briddey fights to gain control over her new extra-sensory abilities without being overwhelmed by them. Other times, it's a biting satire of 21st century capitalism, as profit-obsessed executives rush to be the first to market with complex technologies no one quite understands. But mostly, it's a romance. One of those slushy ones, where you can see the ending coming a mile away, but still find yourself rooting for the couple to look past their superficial differences and *just snog already*.

Crosstalk is a bit too long really, considering how simple a story it boils down to, and there are long stretches where the only thing slowing down the action is Briddey's inability to face what's right in front of her. But then maybe that's part of the point. The book's persuasive, too. So if you spot someone reading this book on public transport, it's probably best to just leave them to it. **Sarah Dobbs**

“At times, it's a biting satire of capitalism”

i Willis had a *rubbery* July: first she was bitten on the ankle by a bat, then she fractured an eye socket falling over.

Reviews



THE CALL

Sídhe Vicious



★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

336 pages | Hardback

► Author Peadar O'Guilin

► Publisher David Fickling Books

❖ **You have to wonder if** Peadar O'Guilin did a little victory dance when he came up with the idea for *The Call*; if he did, it was justified. Set in an Ireland that's been cut off from the outside world for 25 years, it posits that the Sídhe (fairies) – who, long ago, were trapped in another realm by humans – are now looking for revenge. Determined to wipe out the Irish, the Sídhe are stealing teenagers for three minutes and returning them dead or horribly mutilated. Nobody knows when they'll get Called; they just vanish. So desperate teenagers enrol in training camps to get ready – cos three minutes here is a *whole day* of being hunted in the Sídhe's Grey Land, and only a handful return alive.

We follow the training of polio-afflicted Nessa, surely doomed because she can't even run. But we also find out what happens to some of her unfortunate classmates... and nightmares may be had.

This is chilling, brutal stuff, but also perfectly realistic; not only do the gruesome Sídhe hunts sear into your brain, but O'Guilin does a cracking job of painting a group of teens you can believe in. It's slightly let down by the occasional clunky change of narrator, but this is a tiny issue when the whole is so deliciously, disturbingly, *terrifyingly* meaty. **Jayne Nelson**

i In case you're wondering, "Peadar" rhymes with "ladder", and the whole thing is pronounced Padder Oh Gilleen.



NECROTECH

Punk shocker

★★★★☆

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

380 pages | Paperback/ebook

► Author KC Alexander

► Publisher Angry Robot

❖ **It's 32 years since William** Gibson's *Neuromancer* was published, and cyberpunk *still* hasn't gone out of style. It's a flexible subgenre with room for everything from provocative politics to trashy action, but *Necrotech* veers so hard in the direction of lurid shocks that it wears out its welcome fast.

It's the tale of Riko, a tech-enhanced fighter in a dark future where cybernetic nanotechnology can spiral into "necrotech", transforming people into killers. When Riko loses a chunk of her memory and her girlfriend becomes a necrotech victim, she sets off to find who's responsible, and is soon neck-deep in trouble, intrigue and corpses.

KC Alexander throws in some interesting thoughts about technology and transhumanism, and there's no shortage of gore and visceral action. Unfortunately, she also cranks up the bleak, noir-ish attitude to a cartoonish level, giving the narrative a self-consciously "extreme" edge that rapidly gets both exhausting and unpleasant. Riko herself may be a violent, swearsy bad-ass but she also lacks depth and nuance, meaning that despite *Necrotech's* full-tilt pace, it's hard to care about anything in the story behind the action-packed fireworks. **Saxon Bullock**

i KC Alexander previously wrote as Karina Cooper, under which name she penned steampunk urban fantasy.

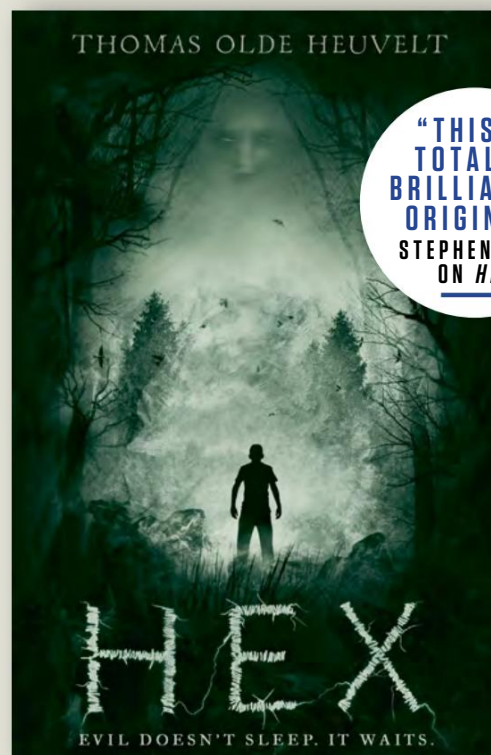
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BOOKS



A CITY DREAMING

Roamin' Polansky

★★★★☆

▶ **RELEASED 6 OCTOBER**

294 pages | Hardback/ebook

▶ Author Daniel Polansky

▶ Publisher Hodder & Stoughton

❖ As cities go, there are few as iconic as New York, but while London has so many urban fantasies that there's a whole Strange London subgenre, the Big Apple hasn't been quite so enthusiastically explored. Daniel Polansky's latest aims to balance the scales in NYC's favour, and conjures up a richly detailed – if occasionally bewildering – experience.

A City Dreaming is the story of a magician known only as M, who returns to the streets of New York and soon finds himself drifting in and out of scrapes with his friends and acquaintances in the occult world. Canal pirates, zombie waiters and reality-altering coffee shops are among the bizarre threats that M encounters along the way, in an offbeat story that's largely told as a series of self-contained episodes or vignettes.

While there is an overarching plot binding the collection of tales together, Polansky keeps it so far in the background that it's frequently easy to miss. *A City Dreaming* often reads more like an eccentric and inventive short story collection than a novel, and its rambling structure and whimsical, magical-realist tone will ultimately either charm you silly or leave you baffled.

Saxon Bullock

i Daniel Polansky is a huge fan of J Dilla. His desert island album is the rapper's final LP, "Donuts".



THE FRIGHTFEST GUIDE TO EXPLOITATION MOVIES

Trash compacted

★★★★☆

▶ **RELEASED 16 SEPTEMBER**

240 pages | Hardback/paperback

▶ Author Alan Jones

▶ Publisher FAB Press

❖ The first in a series, this latest extension of the horror festival brand feels like a throwback to the days when review-compilations like the *Psychotronic Encyclopedia Of Film* – and the zines they sprang from – were a popular way to gen up on trash cinema.

After a brief, terms-defining A-Z, the lion's share of this slim volume consists of reviews of 200 films, dating from 1930 to 1985. SF and horror rub shoulders with biker movies, blaxploitation and nudist films. The odd selection stands out – did Hammer's *The Curse Of The Werewolf* really play the 42nd Street fleapits? Gosh. But many are pleasingly obscure.

FrightFest co-founder Alan Jones has a cruel wit, and does a good job of highlighting interesting connections. A love of alliteration and corny rhymes means his prose has something of the fairground barker about it. This seems fitting.

What really sets it apart is the presentation: full colour, awash with lurid posters and dynamic cutouts. The result is a book that, though no essential reference work, is a pleasure to dip in and out of. **Calvin Baxter**

i In 1975, Alan Jones worked in Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood's shop SEX.



PODKIN ONE-EAR

Bunnies vs the Borg

★★★★☆

▶ **RELEASED 6 OCTOBER**

288 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author Kieran Larwood

▶ Publisher Faber & Faber

❖ In the immortal words of Buffy's rabbit-hating demon Anya: "Bunnies aren't just cute like everybody supposes/ They've got those hoppy legs and twitchy little noses." We suspect she'd be seriously creeped out by the hopping-mad bad guys in this children's book, who are metal-infused, mind-controlled bastards assimilating everything in their path. All of which comes as a bit of a shock to little Podkin, who must leave his warren with siblings Paz and Pook when the nasty Gorm attack, killing any bunny in their path. With the Gorm after Podkin's magical dagger, our furry heroes must fight not only for their lives but to save their world.

The good news is that despite the bloodthirsty villains, this is actually a surprisingly adorable kiddie tale that will leave sprogs considerably less scarred than *Watership Down*. It's also beautifully illustrated. However, it does feel rather slight, with some background characters in serious need of fleshing out (particularly the acrobatic dwarf bunnies named Mish and Mash). As an introduction to a post-apocalyptic rabbit world, though, it's jolly good fun; although this particular story is pleasingly self-contained, expect sequels to breed like... well, rabbits. **Jayne Nelson**

i The BBC and Netflix are making a new adaptation of *Watership Down*, with John Boyega and James McAvoy.

ALSO OUT

Other notable releases include Cixin Liu's **DEATH'S END** (20 September, Head Of Zeus), which concludes the trilogy that began with Hugo winner *The Three-Body Problem*. Also reaching book three: Gillian Anderson and Jeff Rovin's *EarthEnd Saga*, with **THE SOUND OF SEAS** (out now, Simon & Schuster) – expect more "cheesy pseudo-science that borders on Californian New Age hippyshit". So's Marc Turner's epic fantasy *Chronicles Of The Exile*, with **RED TIDE** (20 September, Titan). Please also forgive us for not finding space for **THE PATH OF THE HAWK** (22 September, Orbit), Ian Graham's belated prequel to his 2002 dark fantasy *Monument*. **STAR TREK: 50 ARTISTS, 50 YEARS** (out now, Titan) reproduces the artwork from this celebratory exhibition; take a gander at all 50 pieces by visiting startrek50art.com. Also battling for space on your coffee table: **BLUEPRINT FOR A BATTLESTAR** (15 September, Aurum) uses new illustrations of sci-fi technologies to explain real science concepts. Finally, two *Welcome To Night Vale* companions: **MOSTLY VOID**, **PARTIALLY STARS** and **GREAT GLOWING COILS OF THE UNIVERSE** (out now, Orbit). Each volume includes behind-the-scenes commentary, guest intros, and the full script of an episode. Books fallen... crushing... send help... can't breathe... please erase browser history...



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A HEAD FULL OF GHOSTS *by Paul Tremblay*

Read the mind-bending tale of modern psychological horror that terrified Stephen King.

Merry Barrett's family is torn apart when her older sister Marjorie begins to display signs of acute schizophrenia. One night, she tells Merry a story...

Marjorie sat on her bed with an open book in her lap. She was still dressed in her sweats, and her chin was still stained red with spaghetti sauce. Her hair was dark, greasy, and heavy, weighing down her head.

She said, "Come on, I'm just teasing. Come sit next to me, Merry. I have your new story."

I dutifully sat next to my sister and said, "I didn't like your letter, you know." I imagined Marjorie sneaking into my room and pinching my nose shut while I slept, and it scared me. Then I imagined doing the same right back to her, and it was thrilling. "You can't sneak into my room anymore, or I'll tell Mom. I'll show her the note." I felt brave saying such things, and my bravery puffed up my chest as it lightened my head.

"Sorry. I don't know if I can promise you anything like that." Marjorie turned her head abruptly from side to side, as though she was listening for the sounds of my parents walking out of their room and into the hallway.

"That's not fair."

"I know. But I have your new story." She opened the book on her lap. It was my book, of course, the one she stole from my room: *All Around the World*. She flipped to a page with a cartoon New York City. The buildings were brick red and sea blue, and they crowded the page, elbowing and wrestling one another for precious space. The streets and sidewalks, and the people on the streets and sidewalks, were scribbled over with green ropey lines. She must've used the same green crayon with which she wrote my note.

She said, "New York City is the biggest city in the world, right? When the growing things" – Marjorie paused and ran her hands over the green lines she'd drawn in my book – "started growing there, it meant they could grow anywhere. They took over Central Park, poking through the cement paths and soaking up the park's ponds and fountains. The stuff just came shooting up, crowding out the grass and trees, and the flower boxes in apartment windowsills, and then filled the

The Author



→ Paul Tremblay is a multiple Bram Stoker Award finalist and the author of *Disappearance at Devil's Rock* and *The Little Sleep*. His essays and short fiction have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* and numerous year's-best anthologies. He lives in Massachusetts with his wife and two children.

streets. When people tried cutting the growing things down, they grew back faster. People didn't know how or why they grew. There was no soil under the streets, you know, in the sewers, but they still grew. The vines and shoots broke through windows and buildings, and some people climbed the growing things so they could break into apartments and steal food, money, and HD TVs, but it quickly got too crowded for people, for everything, and the buildings crumbled and fell. They grew fast there, like a foot an hour, just like everywhere else." She kept on talking about how in the suburbs the growing things swallowed up everyone's pretty lawns and gardens and their driveways and sidewalks. And in the country and the farms, the growing things overran the corn, wheat, soy, and all the other crops. They couldn't stop the growing things so people poured and sprayed millions of gallons of weed killer,

which didn't work. People quickly grew desperate and dumped bottles of Liquid-Plumr, lye, and bleach. None of it worked on the stuff and all the chemicals and poisons leached into the groundwater and poisoned everything else.

I was tracing the green loops on the New York City page, my head filling with those snaking vines and thorns and leaves, when I

noticed that Marjorie had stopped talking and was now staring at me.

"There's more. Ask me something."

I knew what she wanted me to ask so I did. "What about us? How do we beat the growing things?"

Marjorie closed the book and turned off a reading lamp clipped to her headboard. It was so dark it was like nothing was there in the room with us. Only the nothing was actually something because it filled my eyes and lungs and it sat on my shoulders.

Marjorie pushed my head down onto her lap. Her legs smelled like sweat, and she petted my head roughly and ran her fingers through my hair, catching strands in her mood ring and yanking them out.

She said, "Toward the end of it all, there were two girls left, living in a small house on the top of a mountain. The house looked just like the cardboard house in your room. The girls' names were Marjorie and Merry. They alone lived with their father. Their mother had disappeared when she went to the grocery store weeks before when the growing things first attacked their town.

"They hadn't enough food anymore and their father wasn't right. He spent most days locked in a room by himself. Poor Marjorie wasn't right either. She was sick. Malnourished. Dehydrated. She heard whispering voices that told her terrible things. She tried to stay in bed and sleep until everything was okay, but it didn't work. Only brave little Merry was still herself.

"On the last day, their father left the house to go find food. He told Merry not to open the front door no matter what and to stay out of the basement. Hours passed and Merry didn't know what to do because Marjorie was coughing and moaning and speaking gibberish. She needed food, water, something. Merry went down into the basement to look for some secret stash of food that they'd forgotten. Instead she found tips of the growing things poking out of the basement's dirt floor. She watched them grow and grow, and as they grew, they pushed up a large shape out of the dirt,

and it hung off the growing things like a broken puppet. It was the body of their mother. Merry knew the horrible truth then, that their father had poisoned their mother and buried her in the basement, and that he'd been slowly poisoning Marjorie as well. It was the only explanation for Marjorie's sickness. Their wicked father had done it and Merry would be next.

"Merry ran out of the basement and upstairs to Marjorie and crawled in bed next to her. The growing things then began to break through the kitchen floor and into the rest of the house, turning everything green. That little cardboard house on the mountain creaked and groaned under the strain of the growing things that tore through the floors and walls and ceilings. But then there was a great knocking on their front door."

Marjorie paused and knocked lightly but insistently on my head. Not hard enough to hurt, but hard enough so it sounded like she was knocking inside my head.

"She screamed so loud it lifted my feet off the floor and pushed me backward"

"Merry tried to ignore the pounding on the door. Instead, she asked Marjorie two questions: 'What do we do if it isn't Dad outside the door? What do we do if it is?'"

I sat up and rolled out of Marjorie's lap and onto the floor, landing on my knees. My crash landing was loud and my teeth smashed together. I stood up, wobbly, tears stinging my eyes.

I was going to shout *you are a horrible sister and I hate you!*

But then Marjorie said, "I'm not well, Merry. I don't mean to frighten you. I'm sorry," and her voice cracked and she curtained her face with her hands.

I said, "It's okay. But you'll get better, right? Then we'll tell normal stories, like we used to. It'll be fun."

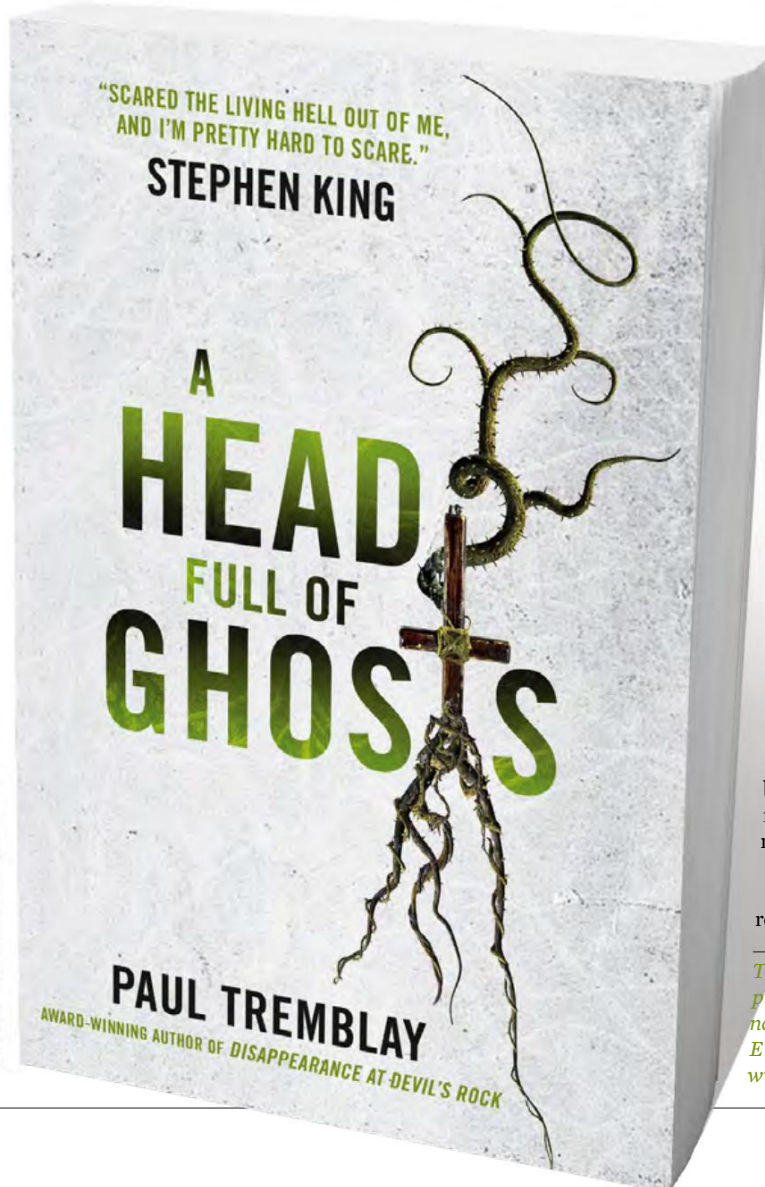
"No. You have to remember that story about the two sisters. You have to remember all my stories because there are – there are all these ghosts filling my head and I'm just trying to get them out, but you have to remember the story about the two sisters especially. Okay? You have to. Please say, 'Okay.'"

Marjorie was just a shadow on her bed. She could've been a pile of blankets, twisted and discarded. I couldn't see her eyes or her spaghetti-sauce-stained chin.

When I didn't answer her, she screamed as though she were being attacked; so loud it lifted my feet off the floor and pushed me backward.

"Say, 'Okay,' Merry! Say it!"

I didn't. And I ran out of her room. ●



To find out what happens next, pick up *A Head Full of Ghosts*, out now from Titan Books (RRP £7.99). E-book also available. www.titanbooks.com

WONDER WOMAN

Rucka's *Rebirth* retcon



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **DC Comics**

► Writer **Greg Rucka**

► Artists **Liam Sharp, Nicola Scott, Matthew Clark**

ISSUES 1-4 "Double shipping"

– it's what happens when a monthly comic transforms into a fortnightly one, and it's a phrase that superhero comic fans love and dread in equal measure. In theory, double shipping means twice the amount of action per month, but it also means twice the cost, and can often lead to inconsistent fill-in artists and a general downturn in quality.

DC's decision to shift the majority of their main superhero titles into fortnightly mode for their new *Rebirth* relaunch has raised some eyebrows (especially

since previous DC weeklies and fortnightlies have been patchy at best), but while it's a risky choice, there are interesting results in the latest *Wonder Woman* ongoing comic.

The new series sees respected writer Greg Rucka returning to DC, and also features an unusual approach to the double shipping conundrum. Instead of just telling one story and alternating each issue between the separate art styles of Liam Sharp and Nicola Scott, we're actually getting two separate alternating *Wonder Woman* adventures, one of which is a newly updated official "Year One" origin story.

We're four issues in (including the *Rebirth* prologue issue), and the present-day section of the story (drawn by Sharp) links in with some of the continuity-

related shenanigans happening elsewhere in the DC universe. Here, Diana becomes convinced that her history has been altered, while her home island of Themyscira has gone missing and something strange is happening in Olympus.

Meanwhile, in alternating issues, the new origin (drawn by Scott) gives us a nicely played, traditional take on Diana's early years. Rucka is so far handling each timeline with style, going for a mythic dark fantasy vibe while giving Diana the right mix of strength and heart. His new origin is also retconning most of the revisionist touches added to the WW mythos by the recent

“Rucka is so far handling each timeline with style”

Brian Azzarello run, making this a good jumping-on point for new readers.

Sharp and Scott give each story thread its own visual identity, and these opening issues have already pulled off impressively atmospheric sequences alongside some creative page layouts. The alternating-issue structure means that the plot isn't exactly moving quickly, while Rucka's take on the origin story doesn't quite have the nutty energy of Grant Morrison's recent *Wonder Woman: Earth One* graphic novel, but this is still a surprisingly consistent and well-executed superhero comic that's a strong showcase for one of DC's most important characters.

Saxon Bullock

i Wonder Woman's 75th anniversary is looming. DC's celebrations include a one-off special (80 pages), due 26 October.



You'll believe a bat can fly.

BATMAN

King inherits the crown



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **DC Comics**

► Writer **Tom King**

► Artists **David Finch, Mikel Janin**

ISSUES 1-5 **How do you follow**

up two of the most highly acclaimed *Batman* sagas of all time? Thanks to the work of Grant Morrison and Scott Snyder, DC's main ongoing *Batman* comic has been an inventive thrill ride for a number of years. Now it's up to new *Batman* writer Tom King (*Grayson*, *The Vision*) to try and match their standards with fresh adventures for the Caped Crusader.

As with many new DC *Rebirth* titles, *Batman* is now twice-monthly, and King's first story arc is very much a mission statement, exploring what happens when two new superpowered vigilantes arrive in Gotham and start aiding Bruce Wayne in his fight against crime.

These first five issues keep the pace high and deliver some strong moments (including a creepy new version of classic villain Calendar Man), but after Morrison and Snyder's wild invention, King's slightly dour take on *Batman* feels like it's stuck in neutral gear. David Finch's art is slickly impressive, and Bat-fans will still find plenty to enjoy – it's just a pity that after being daring and different for so long, DC's main *Batman* title is now back to being just another superhero story.

Saxon Bullock

i Before getting into writing comics, King spent seven years working in counter-terrorism for the CIA.





Ask yourself: worse than Trump?

VOTE LOKI

Make America Asgardian



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher Marvel Comics
► Writer Christopher Hastings
► Artists Langdon Foss, Paul McCaffrey

ISSUES 1-3 Aptly timed for the run-up to the US election, this miniseries sees Marvel's resident God of Mischief running for President, putting his name forward after conveniently saving his main rivals from a Hydra ambush.

His candidacy provides plenty of opportunities for scathing political satire. Unfortunately *Gwenpool* scribe Christopher Hastings's sluggishly paced script rarely rises above the pedestrian, and is not helped by Langdon Foss and Paul McCaffrey's inconsistent art.

With Loki adopting the slogan, "I'm going to lie right to your face and you're going to love it", Hastings emphasises his Arch-Trickster status, and cleverly gets around the natural-born-citizen clause by having his current incarnation hail from Maryland. In a wry nod to Hillary Clinton, Loki also briefly campaigns as a woman. However, Hastings doesn't make the most of the character's gender fluidity, nor fully develop the relationship that Loki establishes with *Daily Bugle* journalist Nisa Contreras, who suspects that he's orchestrating events from behind the scenes; three issues into this four-parter, any conspiracy has yet to take shape. Sadly this is not a winner at the ballot box. **Stephen Jewell**

i Back in 2000, Lex Luthor was elected President in *Superman* (as well as in animated series *Justice League*).



This year he was definitely going to win the cosplay prize.

ANGEL CATBIRD Vol One

The splice of life



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher Dark Horse Comics
► Writer Margaret Atwood
► Artist Johnnie Christmas

GRAPHIC NOVEL Margaret Atwood was raised on '40s titles like *Plastic Man* and *Steve Canyon*, and her debut graphic novel harks back to that golden age. Mirroring the origin of the Flash, biochemist Strig Feleedus is transformed into a bizarre feline/owl hybrid after spilling some gene-altering super-splicer serum upon himself.

Aimed at all ages, *Angel Catbird* sees Atwood eschewing the surreal weirdness of her recent *MaddAddam* dystopian trilogy. As Strig comes to terms with his newfound animalistic nature, he discovers that he's grown fangs and can understand the birdsong around him. He also wants to rub

his face up against his co-worker, Cate Leone – who turns out to be half-moggy herself. The pair then pit their wits against the nefarious, rodent-like Dr Muroid. It's all rather reminiscent of a Saturday morning cartoon; there's even a half-cat/half-bat vampire called Count Catula.

Displaying a fondness for thought balloons, Atwood initially over-explains the characters' actions instead of leaving it up to Johnnie Christmas's vibrant, manga-esque art to tell the story. The book is published in conjunction with Nature Canada, and Atwood reinforces its ecological theme with frequent footnotes. These can become distracting, but are easily ignored.

The book comes to an abrupt conclusion, with most plotlines frustratingly unresolved – leaving the story open for next February's second volume. Though older readers may find it over-simplistic, *Angel Catbird* is a rare but welcome introduction to the superhero genre for younger fans.

Stephen Jewell

“Most plotlines are frustratingly unresolved”

i As a child, Atwood drew comics featuring two flying rabbit superheroes and winged flying cats.



Not just a Shaggy dog story.

SCOOPY APOCALYPSE

Redoing The Doo



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher DC Comics
► Writers Keith Giffen, JM DeMatteis
► Artists Howard Porter, Dale Eaglesham

ISSUES 1-3 “Modern” and “edgy” aren't words you would normally use to describe Hanna-Barbera cartoons like *The Flintstones*, *Wacky Races* and *Scooby-Doo*, but that hasn't stopped DC Comics with its new wave of relaunched, the most attention-grabbing of which is *Scooby Apocalypse*.

Featuring character redesigns from Jim Lee, this new ongoing title recasts the Scooby gang as adventurers in the near future, where a nanotech virus is transforming people into monsters. Each character also has a new backstory, with the most interesting being Shaggy's transformation into a moustachioed hipster. Scooby himself is now an experimental cyber-enhanced canine.

These first three issues are at their best when playing into the silliness of the concept, and when writers Keith Giffen and JM DeMatteis concentrate on the gags, the offbeat approach comes close to working. Unfortunately, *Scooby Apocalypse* also leans heavily on violent action and weirdly out-of-place grimness, resulting in a haphazard comic that ultimately doesn't have anywhere near enough of the original cartoon's daffy slapstick charm. **Saxon Bullock**

i Scooby-Doo's name came from Frank Sinatra singing “doo-be-doo-be-doo” at the end of “Strangers In The Night”.

NO MAN'S SKY

All the world's a stage



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Reviewed on PS4

► Also on PC

► Publisher Hello Games

VIDEOGAME There are 18

quintillion full-sized planets in this procedurally generated space adventure, and if someone discovered a new one every hour from birth until death they would only find 718,320 of them. It's big, is what we're saying, but more important than the impressive stats and all-consuming scale is how *No Man's Sky* plays. You start on a random planet amid ship wreckage, with the aim to gather resources so you can blast off and begin a grand interstellar exploration. The goal? Reach the centre of a star-stuffed universe.

You mine elements, fuel your engines, warp to the nearest star, and repeat the process a few light

years away, but what staves off repetition is never knowing what to expect. Rock formations, weather patterns, soundscapes, fungus, the length of the grass and the colour of the sky – all of it is decided by cold, hard maths, which means your story is your own. We've seen worlds of endless blue oceans; honeycomb cave systems containing towering crystalline treasures; vast ridges of feathered red coral. Each planet has a story to sniff out, like an alien warrior attempting to blow the hinges off a vault and demanding you hand him a combustible stimulant, or a cyborg doctor attempting to inject you with mysterious green goo.

It sounds ungrateful to complain about a game with enough content to last beyond the heat death of the solar system, but that's the root problem, as new sights and sounds quickly boil down to variations on a theme. There's always a lone

“Quickly boils down to variations on a theme”

alien trader on a station. Always a shelter containing a multi-tool blueprint. Stretched across a game this size, that starts to make less and less sense. These niggles settle in after a healthy chunk of time in the company of greatness, however. When the gleam does start to fade, you'll already have encountered fascinating beasts on strange worlds, charged through luminous pink atmospheres, and won mind games with telepathic parasites. Indeed, *No Man's Sky* is an astounding achievement, a technological triumph fashioning numbers into art. As a £40 game, though? You'll struggle to shake the creeping feeling something's missing as your imagination fills in the blanks. **Ben Griffin**

i Hello Games created a mathematical formula to design the weird and wonderful creatures for the game.



He'd had better dinner parties.

BATMAN: THE TELLTALE SERIES Episode One

The Chatty Knight



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Reviewed on PC

► Also on PS4, XO, PS3, 360, Mobile

► Publisher Telltale Games

VIDEOGAME Sing songs of joy

from the rooftops – the Telltale Games engine may finally be fit for purpose again. The stuttering scene transitions and frustrating freezes that plagued past efforts have been all but eliminated from the Dark Knight's debut, while character models and environments have undergone a tasteful but very noticeable upgrade.

An opening scene in which the Caped Crusader interrupts a brazen break-in at City Hall provides an atmospheric introduction. Back at Wayne Manor, however, you'll have to run an altogether different sort of gauntlet, gladhanding with the city's elite as you oversee the launch of Harvey Dent's mayoral campaign. And while this shift from fisticuffs to canapés emphasises the bizarre nature of Wayne's double-life, the writing is of such an uneven quality that it's occasionally difficult to take seriously.

Given the countless incarnations of the Bat over the years, it's commendable that Telltale manage to carve out a fresh take. But a few lacklustre lines and patchy performances prevent this season's opener from stepping fully out of the shadows. **James Nouch**

i Batman/Bruce Wayne is voiced by Troy Baker, while Richard McGonagle's Carmine Falcone is a highlight.



STRANGER THINGS

Volumes One & Two

Indiana Tones

★★★★★

► **RELEASED** 16/23

SEPTEMBER (CD)

OUT NOW! (download)

CD/download

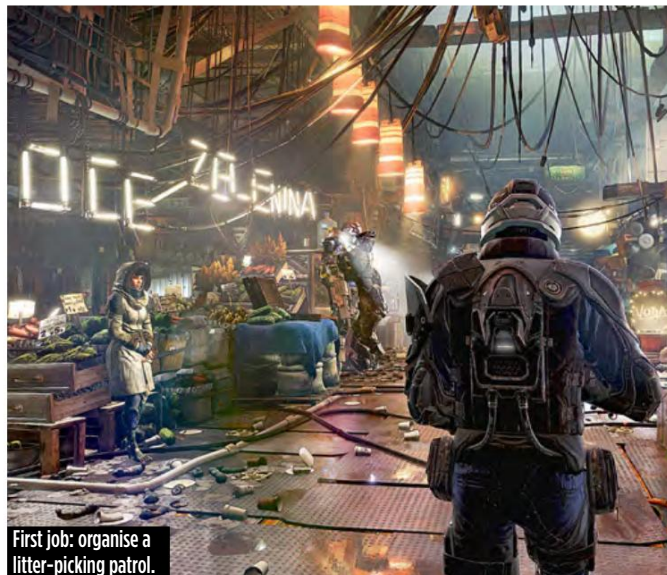
► Label Lakeshore Records

SOUNDTRACK The music for Netflix's wallow in '80s nostalgia is the work of Kyle Dixon and Michael Stein, half of Austin synth quartet *SURVIVE*. Recruited after the Duffer Brothers used a *SURVIVE* track to help pitch the show, they were involved surprisingly early – even sitting in on casting.

It ranges from the sleepy smeared synths of a cue like "This Isn't You" and the lullaby-like delicacy of Eleven's theme, to the UFO foghorns of "Danger Danger" and aural panic attack "Something In The House". Don't expect tunes your postman could whistle – Dixon and Stein lack Giorgio Moroder's knack for a melody. It's also rare that a cue will build the relentless momentum you might associate with John Carpenter. Brian Eno and Tangerine Dream are often better reference points for unobtrusive ambient atmospheres that could be spun in a chill-out room.

Over two volumes, this can get a bit samey, but there's plenty of subtle variation in the tones of the synths. And with 65 tracks – only ten clocking in under a minute – you get plenty of score for your buck. **Ian Berriman**

i *SURVIVE*'s second LP, *RR7349*, is released on 30 September. It features nine instrumental tracks.



First job: organise a litter-picking patrol.

DEUS EX: MANKIND DIVIDED

A Scandal In Bohemia

★★★★★

► **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

Reviewed on PC | Also on PS4, XO

► Publisher Square Enix

VIDEOGAME It's 2029 and cyberpunk Prague is in a bad way. At the end of the previous game a shadowy conspiracy hacked the brains of everyone with bionic augmentations, briefly turning them into violent lunatics. As terrorist bombings deepen divides, it's your job to chase down the forces behind the "Aug Incident" and uncover the figures exploiting the unrest.

Our playable hero Adam Jensen is just the man for the job. He's an ultra-violent one-man-band in a swish designer jacket, infiltrating facilities, pulling off bank heists, and kidnapping gangsters.

Deus Ex games are all about freedom of choice, and *Mankind Divided* is no exception. The game is structured as a series of small open-ended hubs, with Prague as its centrepiece. In the streets you can walk around freely, chatting to people and shopping for weapons.

Restricted areas require a stealthier approach, or a violent one if you decide to play as a gun-toting maniac – a viable route if you want to treat the game as a shooter rather than sneaking around.

Mankind Divided is a great package, and intensely atmospheric. Prague at night, where old world architecture collides with glowing futuristic structures, is especially moody. Golem City is a bustling *Blade Runner* mashup.

Despite all the magnificent views, though, *Mankind Divided* is let down by its story, and a sense that the game's initial ambitions have been curtailed. Fans expecting a series of major hubs will be disappointed by the game's relatively fleeting hops abroad. The story feels similarly thin.

With expectations reset, this is a seriously decent sandbox action game. It left us wanting more, in a slightly unsatisfied way, but is still easily worth the trip. **Tom Senior**

i Golem City, or Útulek Station, is based on Kowloon Walled City in Hong Kong, a slum which was demolished in 1994.



DRACULA

Poirot vs Loki

★★★★★

► **RELEASED** 6 OCTOBER

114 minutes | CD

► Publisher BBC Audio

AUDIO DRAMA After ten years

interred in the Broadcasting House vault, the BBC World Service's adaptation of Liz Lochhead's play of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* has been exhumed. Why? Because it's got that Tom Hiddleston giving voice to article clerk Jonathan Harker, sent to Transylvania to put Count Dracula's more mundane affairs in order, that's why.

Hiddleston's Harker sounds exactly like you'd expect. David Suchet's Dracula is partly in the Bela Lugosi tradition, welishing ewy opportunity to enunciate a heavily-accented double entendre: "I have supped earlier," he tells Harker, "but I will serve you... weeth pleasure." It's when the Count's put-on performance lapses, though, that Suchet's own sprouts wings: "Ach, 'dem-o-crass-ee!'" he complains. "The warlike days are over. Blood is too precious a thing in this time of dishonourable peace..."

That's why the Count is preparing to emigrate, of course. But Lochhead's retelling emphasises that late Victorian England has horrors enough of its own, as evinced by the grotesque treatments endured by fly-eating paranoid schizophrenic Renfield – and later, Dracula's victim Lucy, too – inside Dr Seward's truly gothic asylum. **Alan Barnes**

i In 2006, David Suchet also played Dracula's nemesis Van Helsing, in a BBC TV adaptation.



COLLECTABLES

What we've been playing with this month

1 "The Force Is Strong With This One" claims this **Darth Vader wash bag** (price £19.99), with dazzling originality. It's just one of a wide range from Half Moon Bay which also includes Batman, Superman and Chewbacca designs. Two separate compartments make room for your soapy and toothpaste stuff. Incidentally, can

you imagine how difficult it must have been for the Lord of the Sith to give himself a good wash? He didn't need those Force chokes to make adversaries keel over, he could have just gone and stood next to them.

2 Do they eat pizza in that galaxy far, far away? If so they're probably topped

with blue cheese and heavily processed Bantha meat, and they use something like these **Star Wars pizza cutters** (FPI price £8.99-£12.99; product codes D5959, D5960, D5961, B8096) to slice them up. The Darth Vader lightsaber model is the most impressive, thanks to its decent recreation of the weapon's hilt. The Boba Fett, R2-D2 and Vader

clobber models just come with a basic paint job – though these are rather more comfortable to hold. All four emit an authentic *Star Wars* sound effect as you cut.

3 Why's Chewbacca on this **Star Wars wallet** (price £14.99)? Why not the cheeky space smuggler known as Han Solo? He's a guy much more likely to need somewhere to stash his amoral earnings. What does a Wookiee need money for anyway? Aside from shampoo and hairdryers, obviously. Anyway, this 100% polyurethane accessory (calm yourself) has six pockets – one with a zip, one with a small plastic window. Chewie's bandolier adorns the back of it, his

All products are available at

forbiddenplanet
international
home shopping

www.forbiddenplanet.co.uk
01621 877 222

Reviews



face the front. Just think, you'll be able to put your *Rogue One* tickets in it soon. Hurrah!

4 Another month, another array of ping pong-ball-headed figures. If Jared Leto had been consulted on the design of these **Suicide Squad Dorbz** (FPI price £8.49 each; product codes F3605, F3606, F3607, F3608) then the Joker one would no doubt squirt chilli sauce in your eye, or come packaged inside a box full of used tampons and dead bluebottles. Thankfully, he wasn't. All the same, it's tempting to send one to Will Smith so he can work off a little steam with the aid of a lump hammer.

5 These hefty ceramic **Star Wars steins** (FPI price £7.99 each; product codes D5985, D5986, D5987, D5988, D5989) have smart word-art designs – so Boba Fett's helmet, for example, is formed from phrases like “jet pack”, “EE3 rifle” and “Bounty Hunter”, while the Chewbacca stein features, er, “growl” and “grunt”. Also available are Chewbacca, Yoda, R2-D2 and Darth Vader – which utilises a dark grey-on-black design which is very Sith, but not very legible. They're nice and chunky and perfect for either beer or really, *really* big cups of tea (Imperial measurement fans, we're talking 20 fluid ounces of capacity). You could even make a chicken

Cup-A-Soup – if you're gross and still living in 1985.

6 That antisocial cuss Ming the Merciless loves bombarding planet Earth with freaky weather and death-rays. Now he's got his hands on a deadly new cuteness beam, resulting in these **Flash Gordon Pop! vinyl figures** (FPI price £8.99 each; product codes: F2993, F2994, F2995, F2996). One zap reduced the noble Flash to a mere 9cm in height. But Flash fought back, with the help of bellowing beard-bird Prince Vultan (not pictured), giving Ming and metal-faced lech General Klytus a taste of their own evil medicine. Aw, lookit the silly ickle bad men! ●

THINGS TO COME

More goodies on their way soon



STAR WARS BUSINESS CARD HOLDERS

◆ Impress potential business clients by flashing cartoony-y drawings of R2-D2 and C-3PO! Hmm. On second thoughts, these metal cases are probably best reserved for people in professions as geeky as ours.



CLARA OSWALD FIGURE

◆ This 1:6 scale figure (29cm high) boasts what looks like a decent likeness of Jenna Coleman, and comes with loads of little accessories, including That Stupid Bloody Leaf. A Rose figure is due February-ish.



SLIMER COOKIE JAR

◆ It might not be their intention, but this may make a highly effective slimming aid – if there's one thing that'd stifle our urge to reach for a custard cream or a chocolate digestive it's having to lift the head off *Ghostbusters*' green gannet every time.



SEASON 1

OUTCAST

A different kind of possession drama

► **UK Broadcast** Fox, finished
► **US Broadcast** Cinemax, finished
► **Episodes Reviewed** 1.01-1.10

⚡ **Outcast is a problematic show** to review, because the one truly brilliant thing it has to offer is also a bloody great spoiler. Not so much in the sense of a plot twist; it's not a series that hinges on some big final WTF final revelation. Instead there's something really clever and intriguing inherent in its very format; something that slowly becomes clear as the episodes progress and which gives the show a thought-provoking USP. And it's more fun discovering it for yourself.

So what is safe to discuss? Well, *Outcast* is a possession drama, crafted for screen by *The Walking Dead* creator Robert Kirkman from his own comic. The intention is clear: how do you put a new twist on a genre that has been dominated by *The Exorcist* for so long? *Outcast* achieves this in a number of ways; some of which are quickly evident, the others, not so much.

Kyle Barnes is a wreck of a man, living alone in his hovel of a house in Rome, a small, rural town in West Virginia. His marriage is over and he has a restraining order forbidding him from seeing his wife and daughter. He is,

apparently, a wife beater. The truth is more complicated. Rome is full of people possessed by... something. The local reverend thinks they're demons, of course. Kyle's not so sure. He has the power to exorcise these demons, and that exorcism needs extreme violence to work. In the pilot he literally beats the "demon" out of a small boy. It's deeply unsettling to watch.

So immediately *Outcast* has something different to offer from the usual possession drama. This isn't one exorcist vs one victim. These possessions are rife, and they've been embedded in the town for a very long time. The

ZOOM IN



BEST EPISODE ▲

→ "What Lurks Within" (1.08) in which the demons start seeming like the reasonable ones and we learn something icky about Sidney's past.

TRIVIA

→ One episode was written by Tony Basgallop. It's a bit different to his most famous UK creation - the glossy, campy drama *Hotel Babylon*.

IN-JOKE

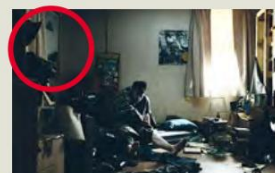
→ One of the graves in the cemetery in "A Wrath Unseen" (1.04) is for a "Mark White", who is the episode's production designer.

BEST MOMENT

→ Not so much "best" as "biggest talking point" - the scene in the pilot when Kyle has to literally beat a demon out of a child.

DID YOU SPOT ▼

→ Kyle has an "I Want To Believe" *X-Files* poster on the wall of his bedroom.





"Of course there are other colours beside brown. We just don't own any."

"violent" nature of the exorcisms also raise questions of morality, questions which deepen as the season goes on and we learn more about the nature of the "demons".

This is all gripping stuff, and the central mystery at the heart of *Outcast* is compelling. The show also has a very impressive cast. Patrick Fugit (*Almost Famous*) is excellent as the raw, emotionally burnt but resolute Barnes while Philip Glenister escapes the shadow of Gene Hunt as the poker-playing reverend with a near monomaniacal need to rid Rome of its demons (his US accent is a darn sight better than it was in *Demons* too). Reg E Cathey is a delight as the jocular but no-nonsense sheriff, while the women – Wrenn Schmidt as Kyle's sister and Kate Lyn Sheil as his wife – make the most of thinly written roles.

Because for all that *Outcast* strives to do something original with its concept, it seems wearily content to go with clichés for its characters and plotting. The Rev and Kyle bicker about the same faith-versus-proof guff week after week. The main

“Nobody talks about what’s going on”

women are all abuse victims (either of supernatural or real world variety). Nobody talks to each other about what's going on. The "demons" talk in riddles until it's big revelation time. Brent Spiner turns up as a mysterious man in black to act as the voice of the demons. It's all rather predictable drama mechanics.

Relentlessly dour and unashamedly slow-paced, the show also never quite delivers on the pilot's promise of boundary-pushing horror until the season finale. In-between it's pretty standard-issue TV shocks.

Having said all that, by the finale, you're still desperate to learn more about these "demons" and what Kyle's next move will be. So the show's doing something right. **Dave Golder**



He'd had it up to here with the local graffiti artists.



★ BEST IN SHOW ★

The characters who make TV great

DUSTIN HENDERSON

Stranger Things had its very own Goonie

► UK Broadcast **Netflix** ► US Broadcast **Netflix**

• Yeah, we know – what about Eleven? *Stranger Things*' resident psychic is, undeniably, the coolest character in our new favourite show. But if there's one face that sums up *Stranger Things*' '80s appeal, then it's surely Gaten Matarazzo as Dustin – the loveable, baseball-capped *X-Men* fanboy. *Stranger Things* as a whole does a great job of appearing to be a transmission from some parallel universe where the '90s never happened, but there's something quite uncanny about just how perfectly Matarazzo nails the look. The curly hair, the hat, the smile, the teeth (or lack thereof) – it's all completely on point. You can easily imagine Matarazzo being cast in some of the show's touchstone movie influences – running around on an adventure with the Goonies, perhaps, or beach-combing on Antonio Bay while dodging "the fog".

But it's not just his look that makes Dustin so appealing – it's Matarazzo's performance. "We met Gaten and basically tailored the show to him," co-showrunner Matt Duffer has admitted. Indeed, they wrote the actor's real cleidocranial dysplasia into the show. Since then, Matarazzo says, he's been bombarded with letters from viewers with the same dental condition, thanking him for being such a positive on-screen presence.

And positive he is. Dustin supports Mike when he starts to doubt their mission. He holds the group together when Lucas wigs out. He revels in *Dungeons & Dragons* and comics and the fact that he's a part of a real adventure. He's one of us and his warmth contributes hugely to the show's palpable sense of enthusiasm. It's a masterful performance from the 13-year-old actor and we can't wait to see more in season two. **Will Salmon**



SPURIOUS AWARDS

Celebrating the silliest and strangest moments from the month in TV



BARREL-SCRAPING OF THE MONTH

Strictly Come Dancing is seriously stretching for celebs this year, which is good news for *Fear The Walking Dead* extras...



AVANT GARDE MENU OF THE MONTH

We're giving *The Fat Duck* a miss for a few months just in case Heston Blumenthal's been watching *BrainDead* for inspiration.



FREE-RANGE MEAT OF THE MONTH

While we're on the subject, remind us not to choose the *Killjoys* kebabs off the menu at *The Fat Duck* either...



EXTREME MAKEOVER OF THE MONTH

Good to see that the Tin Man of *Oz* is still in gainful employment in shows like *Killjoys* now he has a heart.



PERFORMANCE ART OF THE MONTH

A hit at this year's Edinburgh Fringe – man re-enacts Moon landing (and the *American Horror Story* team film it).



DRAUGHT EXCLUDER OF THE MONTH

In *Preacher*, Jesse discovers something handy for his love life in a bank vault (he has a very draughty bedroom).



NOSTALGIC COSPLAY OF THE MONTH

A touching tribute to Kirk's '60s *Star Trek* easy-rip shirts (and slightly-beginning-to-bulge gut) in *Dark Matter*.



OFFER OF THE MONTH

A divine bargain in *Preacher*, for a smooth meeting with God.



HEALTH WARNING OF THE MONTH

Listen to *Outcast*: DON'T PICK YOUR SCABS!



UNEXPECTED GUEST STAR OF THE MONTH

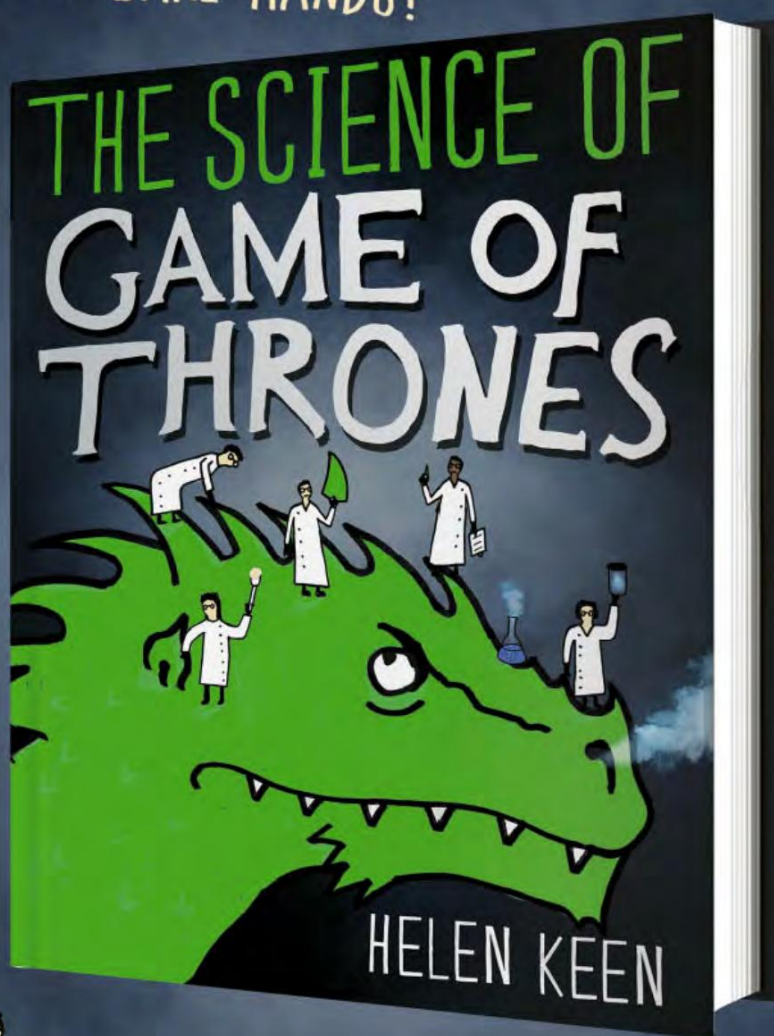
Yes, ALF really did have a cameo in *Mr Robot*.

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ACTUALLY EXIST?

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TIM BURTON

How deep is your knowledge of Hollywood's freak supremo?

Quizmaster Nick Setchfield, Features Editor

QUESTION 1

Burton's childhood in which Californian suburb inspired the story of *Edward Scissorhands*?

QUESTION 2

What was the name of Burton's 1997 book of art and poetry?

QUESTION 3

Burton worked as a concept artist on which 1982 SF classic, though his work never made it to screen?

QUESTION 4

1982 stop-motion short *Vincent* was a tribute to which horror icon?

QUESTION 5

Burton's breakthrough came with 1985's *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*. Star Paul Reubens cameoed as which character in the *Batman* universe?

QUESTION 6

Which is the only Burton movie to be turned into a touring ballet?

QUESTION 7

Which iconic DCU character was Chris Rock set to play in Burton's never made *Superman Lives*?

QUESTION 8 PICTURE QUESTION

Beetlejuice is a freelance bio-exorcist – how is his name actually spelt on his tombstone?

QUESTION 9

In the mid '90s Burton fell out with composer Danny Elfman – who scored *Ed Wood* instead?

QUESTION 10

Who did Christopher Walken play in *Batman Returns* – and who or what was his name a tribute to?



QUESTION 8



QUESTION 14



QUESTION 11



QUESTION 16

QUESTION 11 PICTURE QUESTION

Burton wrote and produced *The Nightmare Before Christmas* – but who actually directed it?

QUESTION 12

Martin Landau won an Oscar for playing Bela Lugosi in *Ed Wood*. Who did he play in *Space: 1999*?

QUESTION 13

What connects *Mars Attacks!* with 1965 James Bond adventure *Thunderball*?

QUESTION 14 PICTURE QUESTION

Ichabod Crane was a teacher in Washington Irving's short story *The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow*. What was his profession in Burton's adaptation?



QUESTION 15

Which make-up supremo connects *An American Werewolf In London*, Michael Jackson's "Thriller" video and Burton's *Planet Of The Apes*?

QUESTION 16 PICTURE QUESTION

In 2006 Burton directed his first music video. Name the band and the song.

QUESTION 17

Which Brit comedy star played Tweedledum and Tweedledee in 2010's *Alice In Wonderland*?

QUESTION 18

Exactly how many Burton-directed (and co-directed) movies has Johnny Depp starred in?

QUESTION 19

Which Burton character owned a "tensorial parlour" in Fleet Street?

QUESTION 20

Burton adapted Roald Dahl's *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory* in 2005. As a producer, what other Dahl novel did he bring to the screen?

Answers
1 Burbank 2 *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* 3 *Ton of Pence* 4 The Penguins 5 *Edward Scissorhands* 6 Jimmy Olsen 8 Betelgeuse 9 Howard Shore 10 Max Shreck – Max Schreck was the star of 1922's *Nosferatu* 11 Henry Selick 12 John Koenig 13 Tom Jones appears in *Mars Attacks!* and sang the *Thunderball* theme 14 Policeman Rick Baker 16 "Bones" by The Killers 17 Matt Lucas 18 8 19 Sweeney Todd 20 *James And The Giant Peach*

How did you do?

Burton belter or
Burton blow-out?



→ 0-5
Planet Of The Apes



→ 6-10
Mars Attacks!



→ 11-15
Sleepy Hollow



→ 16-19
Edward Scissorhands



→ 20
Ed Wood

Total Recall

Personal recollections of cherished sci-fi



XANDER HARRIS

Ian Berriman, Reviews Editor

I guess it's no great surprise that Xander is the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* character I empathise with the most. He's not a fighter – how many hours must actor Nicholas Brendon have spent being tossed into corners? He has no supernatural abilities, no command of magic. On the face of it, his only skill is his verbal dexterity. He's clearly a surrogate for *Buffy* creator Joss Whedon, who's confessed he was “a pathetic loser” in high school. His romantic life is generally a disaster. He owns a collection of *Babylon 5* commemorative plates. Yes, it's a bit close to home...

Yet in other respects... what would I give to be *more* like Xander? He's a far better person than I am. Although his feelings of uselessness – that he's the Scooby Gang's fifth wheel – recur, time and time again he proves himself. Season three's Xander-centric “The Zeppo” – which ingeniously makes the apocalypse the B-plot, while Xander's misadventures play out in the foreground – is one of my favourites. In it, Xander saves every one of his friends from being blown to pieces, just by being prepared to die to save them. That's real bravery. And when Wiccan Willow goes Dark in season six, consumed with a thirst for magical vengeance after her girlfriend's death, it's Xander – in a heartbreaking scene – who talks her



down, by simply telling his friend over and over that he loves her, and will always love her, no matter what. Gulp.

It's the sort of role which looks easy, but watch “The Replacement”, in which Xander's split into two personalities – one klutzy, one confident – and suddenly you become aware of all the hard work Nicholas Brendon's doing to infuse the character with nervous energy and charm. The guy has talent.

That makes it all the more sad that Brendon's life has gone off the rails since the show ended, with struggles with depression and alcoholism resulting in failed suicide attempts and multiple arrests (most troublingly, the actor last year pleaded guilty to choking his girlfriend during a fight). If only it was as straightforward to achieve redemption in real life as it is in a TV script. Let's hope he can earn it.

That doesn't affect how I feel about Xander, though. You can call him the audience identification figure, label him as the comic relief, but that's doing the character a huge disservice. He's the beating heart of *Buffy*, and I can't imagine it working without him. ●

Ian laughs in the face of danger, and then he hides until it goes away.

Fact Attack!

→ The role was originally offered to Ryan Reynolds, but he said no. “High school was hell for me, and I'd be damned if I was going to go back.”

→ Nicholas Brendon has an identical twin brother, Kelly Donovan, who regularly acted as his stand-in – and doubled for him in “The Replacement”.

→ Making the final season, the writing team considered having evil preacher Caleb kill Xander in “Dirty Girls” (7.18), not just blind him in one eye.

→ Season seven's “Conversations With Dead People” is the only one of 14 *Buffy* episodes in which Xander does not appear.

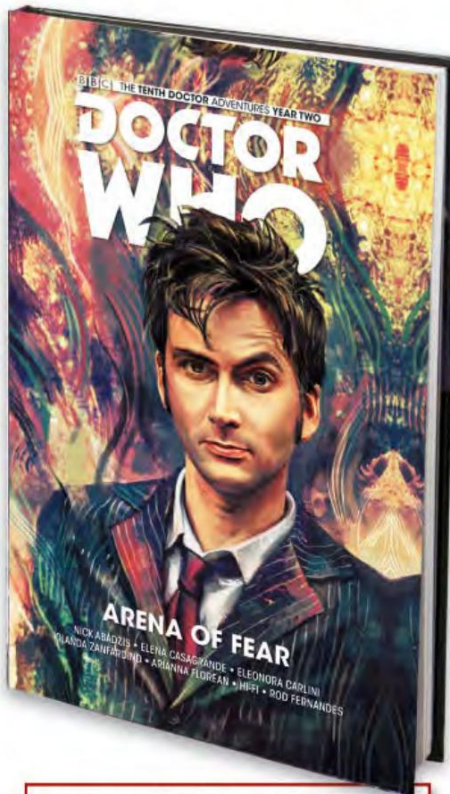
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NEXT MONTH!
12 OCT
DETAILS ON
PAGE 41

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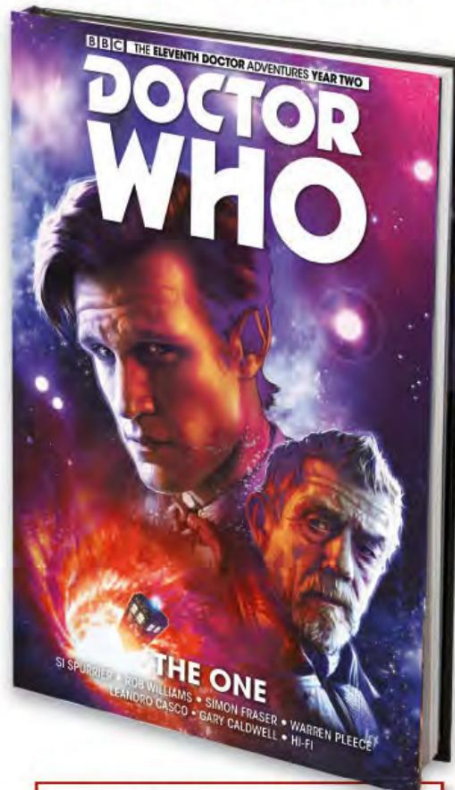
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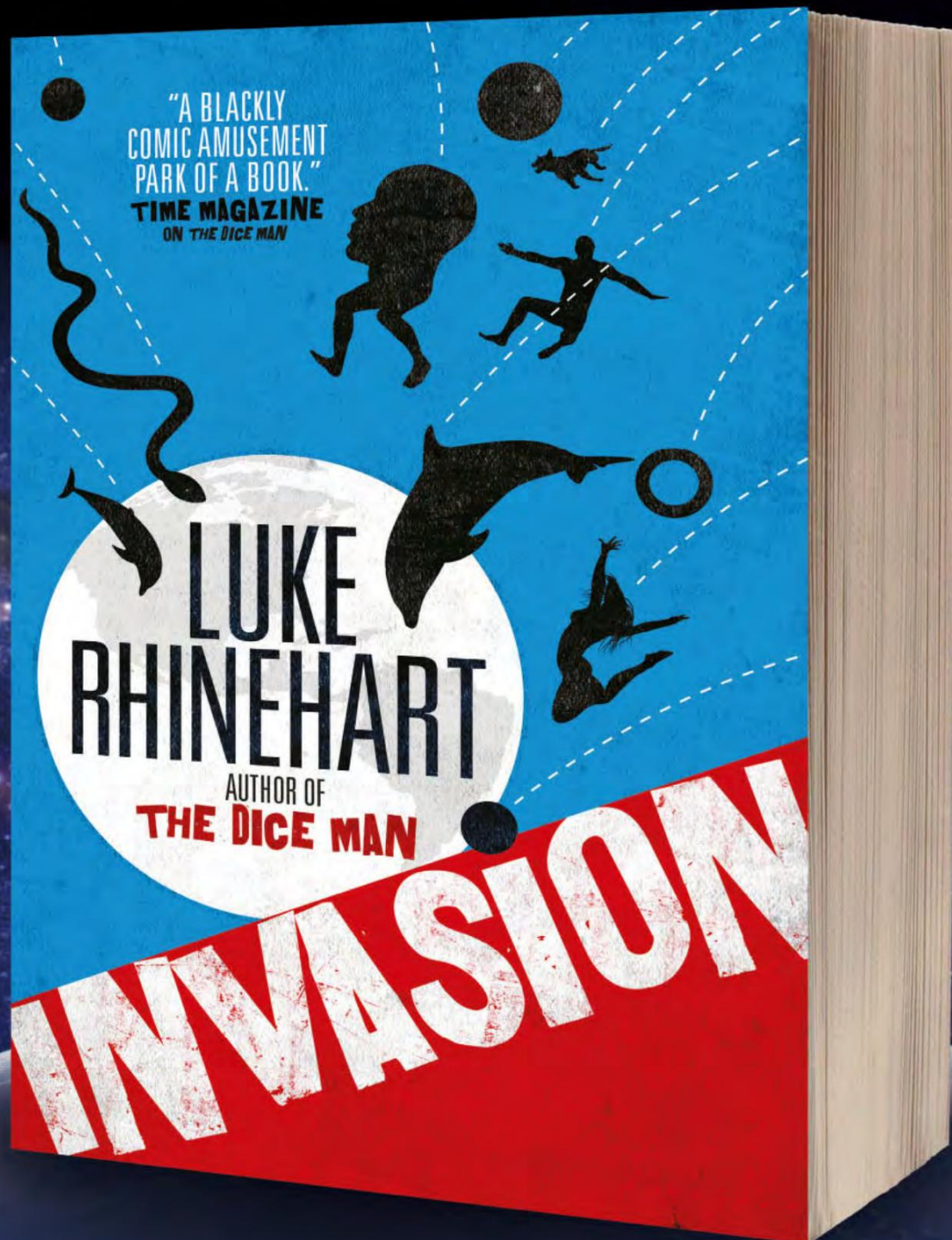


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A detailed image of the Red Dwarf spaceship, a rusty, cylindrical vessel with various protrusions and a small, irregular rock-like object attached to its side. It is positioned in the center of the poster, floating in space.

RED DWARF

THE END TO THE BEGINNING

THE FIRST 28 YEARS...

An **SFX** Celebration

SFX

WORDS Richard Edwards, Dave Golder

DESIGN Jonathan Coates, Nicky Gotobed, Catherine Kirkpatrick

PRODUCTION Russell Lewin

THANKS TO Justine Bower, Ben Duncan, Doug Naylor, Richard Naylor, everyone at UKTV and Grant Naylor Productions

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WHAT THE SMEG?

More than 28 years after our first encounter with Rimmer, Lister, Holly and the Cat, *Red Dwarf* is back this month for its 11th series. Just to put that in perspective, when the show launched back in 1988, Margaret Thatcher was prime minister, Ronald Reagan was President of the USA, and the Cold War was still ongoing. The highest grossing films of the year were *Rain Man*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and *Coming To America*, and Liverpool were the dominant football team in England.

The world has changed massively since then (sorry, Liverpool fans), but *Red Dwarf* is still thriving, both one of the longest-running sitcoms and one of the longest running sci-fi shows – particularly impressive seeing as, unlike *Doctor Who*, it still has the same core cast as when it began. Over its 61 episodes it's made us laugh a lot, and introduced us to some ingenious and memorable sci-fi ideas – often in the same breath. It also broke audience records on BBC Two, and brought the terms “smeghead”, “gimboid” and “goit” into the lexicon.

We think all of those achievements make *Red Dwarf* well worth celebrating, so in the 36 pages of this exclusive mini-mag *SFX* has done just that, travelling three million years into the future to take in “The End”, “The Beginning” and the bits in between. So thanks for the memory, *Red Dwarf* – we hope you enjoy our tribute.

Rich

Richard Edwards
Editor, *SFX*

CONTENTS

4 THE HISTORY OF RED DWARF

Co-creator Doug Naylor looks back on the show's history.

10 RED DWARF VITAL STATISTICS

How do you boil down 28 years of television comedy into facts and figures? We've had a go.

14 BEHIND THE SCENES

A glimpse at what goes on when the TV cameras aren't rolling.

16 THE A-Z OF RED DWARF

A guide to the supporting players who populate the *Red Dwarf* universe.

24 SCI-FI IN RED DWARF

Why *Red Dwarf* is as clever about its sci-fi as *Star Trek*.

28 NEW MERCH!

A sneak peek at the first official *Red Dwarf* goodies in a decade.

30 TEN ESSENTIAL EPISODES

Imagine you'd never seen the show before. This would be a good place to start.

34 RED DWARF QUIZ

Test your knowledge of the show.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

Co-creator **Doug Naylor** talks Richard Edwards through *Red Dwarf*'s epic history

In most universes, sitcoms aren't generally known for their longevity. But *Red Dwarf*'s 28 years (and counting) is an exceptional haul for any TV show, especially one that exists in the far-from-crowded area of the Venn diagram where sci-fi and comedy overlap. So how is it that nearly three decades after it first blasted onto BBC Two in 1988, *Red Dwarf* is not just alive, but thriving – with two new series in the can, (one due in September, the other in 2017)? It's a remarkable feat considering that, back in the mid-'80s, even getting one series was something of a mission.

Rob Grant and Doug Naylor started writing *Red Dwarf* over a week in North Wales in 1984. Their script picked up early interest from two of the hottest producing talents in British TV comedy – John Lloyd (*Blackadder*, *Spitting Image*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*)

and Paul Jackson (*The Young Ones*). “We showed the first script to Paul Jackson,” recalls Naylor. “He said, ‘Don't bother. I promise you, you'll never sell it. They hate science fiction!’”

The BBC had already passed on the script a couple of times when Grant and Naylor had a crack at pitching it to the bigwigs at the BBC themselves.

“We went to see the BBC's head of comedy, but he just flat out didn't get it,” Naylor recalls. “He said, ‘People won't be able to relate to people on a spaceship, because that's not anything in anyone's life, whereas a sofa and French windows, people can relate to. So if you could somehow start the show off with a sofa and French windows and



Rimmer and Lister with the first incarnation of Kristine Kochanski (Clare Grogan).

The crew you've known
for all these years...



"I thought it was going to be the biggest comedy on TV. That was until I walked on set and realised people wouldn't be blown over"

then it *turned out* to be a spaceship, to ease people in, that might help.'

"We pointed out that you don't often get sofas and French windows on spaceships!" Naylor laughs. "He wound up commissioning us for a science fiction comedy, but not *Red Dwarf* – which we still [haven't] written!"

Channel 4 also suggested making it into a one-off for their "Film On 4" strand, but Grant and Naylor turned them down. "We said no, because we wanted it to be a TV series. The balls of it now!"

Over the next three years outer space went quiet, as the duo continued to write for *Spitting Image*, and "kind of forgot about *Red Dwarf* a little bit". But, in a

moment of good fortune that suggested someone might have released a luck virus into the air ducts, Jackson came back to them with an opportunity. It turned out that BBC North had a slot for a comedy free in Manchester after Ben Elton had decided he didn't want to do a second series of *Happy Families*. Jackson pitched *Red Dwarf* along with two other scripts.

"They said, 'Okay, fine, we'll do *Red Dwarf*,'" explains Naylor. "I think one of the reasons BBC Manchester commissioned it was because they thought whatever they did would probably fail – most comedy does – and wanted to protect themselves by doing something weird so they could

say to BBC London that at least they were trying something original and new."

First broadcast in February 1988 and populated with a cast of then-unknowns, debut episode "The End" got over four million viewers on BBC Two – an impressive start, though viewing figures for that first series soon dropped off, a fact Naylor puts down to the show's low-budget aesthetic, light years away from the sci-fi TV coming from the other side of the Atlantic.

"I'd been convinced it was going to be enormous," he admits. "I thought it was absolutely going to be the biggest comedy on TV for three series. And then obviously you'd only ever do three series, and that was it. That was until I walked on set for show one and realised people weren't going to be blown over. I thought, 'Okay, we might need a bit more time to get this right. We asked them not to repeat it →"

because we didn't think we'd got it quite right."

They got a chance to have another crack at proving themselves with a second series...

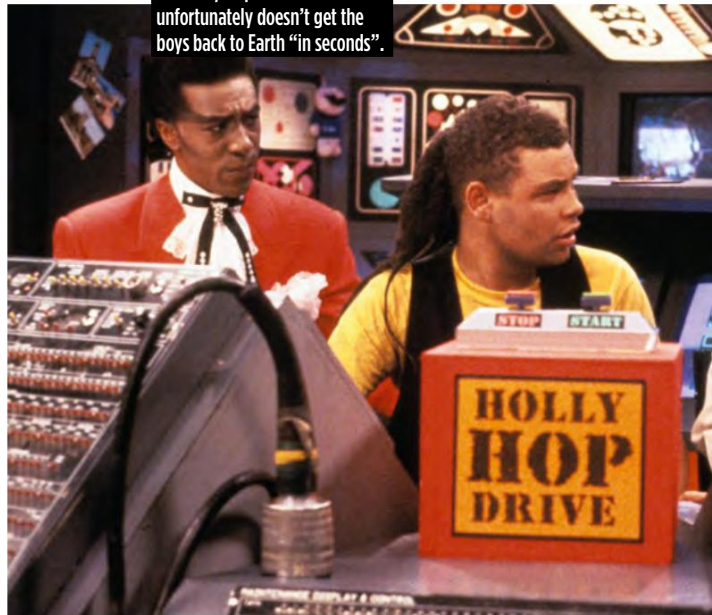
"The second series then took off in a small way," Naylor recalls. "When it was repeated, it got the exact same figures as the first time. We were always in the top 10 for ratings on BBC Two. Though BBC Two at the time had a series of controllers, some of whom, we understand, hated it. But they couldn't get rid of it because of the ratings!"

NEW-IMPROVED

Series three came with big changes. "That was when Rob and I became producers. We wanted it to look different, to look better."

Rimmer's uniform became less vending machine repairman, more starship officer. The opening credits were funky up, with a new rockified version of the end credits theme. A new craft, Starbug, was introduced to get the boys off the Dwarf more often. Holly the computer gave himself a head sex change in honour of his parallel universe counterpart, Hilly (with Hattie Hayridge taking over from Norman Lovett). And perhaps most importantly, Kryten – the

The Holly Hop Drive unfortunately doesn't get the boys back to Earth "in seconds".



"I got a call from a journalist in America saying it was the biggest thing on PBS television since *Monty Python*"

mechanoid who'd been a guest star in the series two episode that bears his name – became a regular member of the crew.

"We'd thought we had enough characters, and then we realised that we didn't," says Naylor. "Rob in particular didn't want to have a robot because he thought it was a real cliché. Although I accepted it was a cliché, I argued it depends on what you do with it. I thought Kryten was a great character and would be great in the mix. It was a three-, four-month discussion, and finally we agreed that was the way we were going to go.

"The idea originally was to bring back David Ross, who

played the original Kryten," Naylor adds, "but he wasn't available. It was Paul Jackson who said there was a guy in Edinburgh who does a thing about robots called *Mammon*, and it might be worth seeing him.

"Why, because he's played a robot?" It sounded like the most lazy idea! But Robert [Llewellyn] came in for the audition and I don't think we saw anyone else after that. Having said that, we started shooting, and he didn't have the voice at all. It was English at that point, and then it sort of evolved over the first week of the shoot that he became Kryten."



Doug Naylor introduces a live recording.

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HISTORY OF RED DWARF



©BBC

in America saying it was the biggest thing on PBS since *Monty Python*. So when I did publicity I just threw this in and suddenly it was in all the papers, saying *Red Dwarf* is a massive hit, because they love those stories where a British thing is a huge hit outside the UK. That coincided with season three, and we took off from that point, really.”

HEY, GOOD LOOKING

When *Red Dwarf* returned from a four-year break in 1997, it looked very different – on both sides of the camera. Co-creator Rob Grant had left, Chris “Rimmer” Barrie appeared in just a few episodes, Lister’s ex, Kochanski, was now a regular character (played by Chloë Annett) and the show had a more cinematic look. And for the first time, it wasn’t filmed in front of a live studio audience.

“[Director] Ed Bye’s view was, ‘If we were going to make a film we should shoot it single camera and not have the audience, because it would look more filmic. And if do end up doing a →

The show became a ratings smash, breaking records for BBC Two, and spawning spin-offs galore. There were novels; a monthly “Smegazine” that ran for 23 issues and featured a *Red Dwarf* comic strip; lots of merchandise (the *Red Dwarf* t-shirt was an essential part of a ’90s teenager’s wardrobe); and two pilots were also made for a potential American spin-off (one of which featured *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*’s Terry Farrell as a female version of the Cat). While it’s tempting to put the success down to iconic and memorable storylines like “Backwards”, “Polymorph”, “Dimension Jump” and “Back To Reality” in those glory years of series III–VI, Naylor puts it down to something else.

“I think the production values were great in III and IV, but I think some of the ideas, like ‘Thanks For The Memory’ or

‘Future Echoes’ which were in II, were really good. I think maybe the execution got better in III to VI. It was good times. It was great fun writing those shows.

“The real turning point, I think, was when we were half way through shooting series three, I got a call from a journalist



The crew with Holly’s new head.

Red Dwarf is only 28 years younger than Coronation Street!



film, it would be good practice for the guys. The argument made sense to me. But then what happened was, there were never enough gaps for the laughter, because you can't expect the cast to accurately guess every gap. It wasn't the best thing to do, but I only realised that after the event.

"So we got the audience back on VIII. They were a bit raucous that audience. It was like having a rock and roll night! But the cast love working with an audience. It brings them alive."

Despite 1999's series VIII topping eight million viewers, it would be the last run the

Dwarfers would get on the BBC – and their last new episodes anywhere for a decade.

DEVELOPMENT HELL

But *Red Dwarf* never went away – through much of that "lost" decade Naylor was working on the long-mooted *Red Dwarf* movie. "We were trying to get the film off the ground for ages," he explains. "There were so many drafts of the movie. There isn't a definitive script, because I was constantly being asked either to rewrite it to make it more expensive, or to then rewrite the rewrites to make it cheaper. It kept looking like it was getting very close, and then we had the money fall through so it all fizzled out, and it looked like that would be it."

But in the meantime, repeats of the show had become something



A bit like being on *Fifteen To One*.

The series X vintage, and *SFX*'s uber-rare guest-star cover.



"I was constantly being asked to either rewrite the film to make it more expensive, or to then rewrite the rewrites to make it cheaper"

a phenomenon on UKTV's Dave channel. So popular, in fact, that UKTV approached Naylor about getting the cast back together – in costume – to provide a framework for a clip show. Those plans were eventually abandoned in favour of an all-new three-part series, "Back To Earth" (2009), a fourth-wall-busting story that saw Lister, Kryten, Rimmer and the Cat coming back to present-day Earth, finding out they're

characters in a long-running space-set sitcom (they even see themselves on the cover of *SFX*), and meeting *Coronation Street* star Craig Charles, who, er, looks kind of familiar. The budget was small, with just "three proper sets", location shoots and CG backgrounds (film school students helped out with some of the effects), but it was a huge success, breaking records for a digital-only channel.

"I knew where I was going, and I knew I had to prove to UKTV [it could be successful]," Naylor says. "I just thought, we'll just get something made in the best way we possibly can with the limitations of this micro budget. But equally, once it's out there, then I can change things. That's thankfully what happened. It got fantastic figures!"

"Back To Earth" opened the door for an all-new, six-part series X, which debuted in 2012 – and really was a return to the feel of the '80s and '90s. "I told

them, I want it to be like the BBC Two show, 30 minutes, with the four boys primarily on Red Dwarf and with complete stories. And I want an audience. So that's what we did."

Like its predecessor, *Red Dwarf X* was again a big ratings success, proving popular with

fans and critics. *SFX* described it as "a triumphant return to form", and pointed out that "people wanted it to be good and were happy that it deliriously was." There seems to be plenty of life left in that giant red spaceship."

"Even now there's new generations watching it," says Naylor. "People watch it and like it. They have kids, and the kids watch it." So if you find yourself waking up from stasis in three million years time, it might be worth seeing if *Red Dwarf* is still out there... *O*

Red Dwarf XI airs on Dave from 22 September.

RED DWARF VITAL STATISTICS

Twenty-eight years in deep space boiled
down into facts and figures

DAVE LISTER FAMILY TREE



**MOST VIEWERS FOR A
RED DWARF EPISODE**
For series VIII premiere in 1999



UK CHART POSITION REACHED
BY THE CAT'S **"TONGUE
TIED"** SINGLE IN 1993



ARNOLD RIMMERS
AS **SAD AND
WORTHLESS**
AS THE ONE
ABOARD RED DWARF
"Dimension Jump", series IV

2181

YEAR SECOND TECHNICIAN
ARNOLD J RIMMER
FAILED TO REPAIR
A DRIVE PLATE PROPERLY



**BAKED PRODUCTS MENTIONED
IN EXCHANGE BETWEEN LISTER
AND TALKIE TOASTER**

"White Hole", series IV (In case you're wondering, it's toast, muffins, teacakes, buns, baps, baguettes, bagels, croissants, crumpets, pancakes, potato cakes, hot cross buns, flapjacks and waffles)

14

**MAXIMUM NUMBER OF
HOLOGRAMS THAT CAN BE
SUSTAINED BY HOLLY AT A TIME**

"The End", series I

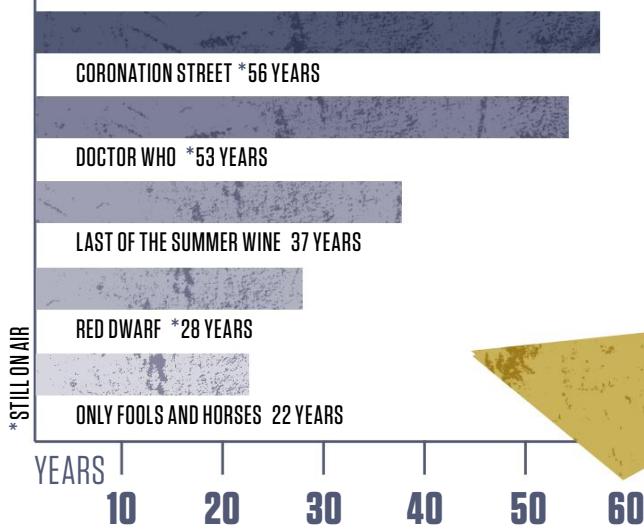


10 TIMES HOLLY HAS TO

**USE THE WORD "DEAD"
TO EXPLAIN TO LISTER
WHAT'S HAPPENED
TO THE CREW**

"The End", series I

LONG-RUNNING TV SHOWS



WHICH ONE IS THE BIGGEST?



DARTH VADER'S STAR DESTROYER
Length: 19km

3,000,000
YEARS DAVE LISTER
SPENT IN STASIS

("The End", series I)



6,000

HOLLY'S PRE-COMPUTER SENILITY IQ

12,368

HOLLY'S SHORT-LIVED ENHANCED IQ

("White Hole", series IV)

169
COMPLEMENT
OF CREW ON
RED DWARF
("The End", series I)



RED DWARF
Length: 9.6km

1,169
REVISED
COMPLEMENT
OF CREW ON
RED DWARF
("Justice", series IV)



BATTLESTAR GALACTICA
Length: 1.4km

61
EPISODES OF RED
DWARF AIRED
TO DATE*
(*Prior to series XI)



USS ENTERPRISE (NCC-1701)
Length: 0.3km



RED DWARF XI

See it first on UKTV Play
15th Smegtember



Dave on



play



uktvplay.co.uk

CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Behind the scenes photos from the
Red Dwarf archive

Applying finishing touches
to a Red Dwarf model.
(Not a pair of giants.)



In rehearsal
for series I.



The stage for series X's
live recordings.



Kryten's spare heads
take a break.



Can't quite put our fingers on it, but there's something different about Kryten.

Rimmer and Holly's
Hamlet?



Dave Lister's dreads don't style themselves, you know...



FROM ABLE TO ZLURTH

A potted A-Z of *Red Dwarf*'s supporting players

WORDS Dave Golder

You know about Rimmer, Lister, Cat, Kryten, Holly and Kochanski. But over 10 series, 61 episodes and 28 years, *Red Dwarf* has built a vast universe – so huge, in fact, that we couldn't fit all of the supporting players here. Here's a quick-ish guide to the key people, aliens and robots who've crossed paths with the boys from the Dwarf.



ABLE
FIRST APPEARANCE "BEYOND A JOKE" (SERIES VII)

A DivaDroid International Series 4000 Mechanoid; Kryten's production brother who became a slave to a Simulant Trader, who got him addicted to a mechanoid narcotic called Outrozone. He was never going to iron a straight crease after that.

ACKERMAN, MR
FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK IN THE RED, PART III" (SERIES VIII)
Sadistic, one-eyed prison governor

of *Red Dwarf*'s the Tank. Also in charge of the Canaries – volunteer convict armies in the Space Corps, utilised for missions deemed too dangerous for less expendable personnel.

ANDY
FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK TO REALITY" (SERIES V)

Irritating tech guy working at the Total Immersion Video Game arcade. Very Brummie.



APOCALYPSE BOYS, THE
FIRST APPEARANCE "GUNMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE" (SERIES VI)

Four grizzly Western outlaws who were Kryten's fantasy manifestation of the Armageddon Virus: Brother Death, Brother War, Brother Famine and Brother Pestilence.



BARTOKOVSKY, KATERINA
FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK TO EARTH, PART I"

A hologram called into being after a gross act of negligence by Rimmer. She was allegedly based on the Dwarf's science officer, and she hated Rimmer. Actually a hallucinatory product of the second Despair Squid.

BAXTER
FIRST APPEARANCE "PETE, PART I" (SERIES VIII)

Large scary prisoner in *Red Dwarf*'s the Tank who once proved how hard he was by betting his testicle in a card game.

BEGGS
FIRST APPEARANCE "ENTANGLED" (SERIES X)

Biologically Engineered Garbage Gobblers, created to eat landfills. Lister lost Starbug and Rimmer to a BEGG chief in a game of poker. The BEGG fitted Lister with a groinal exploder to ensure he handed over his winnings.

BENNET, ELIZABETH**FIRST APPEARANCE** "BEYOND A JOKE" (SERIES VII)

A recreation of the *Pride And Prejudice* character in the interactive Jane Austen World. (See also Bennets Jane, Kitty, Lydia, Mary and Mrs.)

BIRDMAN**FIRST APPEARANCE** "PETE, PART I" (SERIES VIII)

Crazy old prisoner in the Hole who had a special friendship with his sparrow, Pete.

**BLENKINSOP, OSWALD****FIRST APPEARANCE** "CASSANDRA" (SERIES VIII)

A prisoner in the Tank on Red Dwarf, and a member of the Canaries. Comes across as a perpetual lager lout. Nicknamed Kill Crazy, he was desperate to kill someone.

BRANNIGAN**FIRST APPEARANCE** "QUEEG" (SERIES II)

A psychiatrist on Red Dwarf whose personality was briefly downloaded into Rimmer.

BROWN, CAROL**FIRST APPEARANCE** "BODYSWAP" (SERIES III)

Executive officer aboard Red Dwarf whose personality was briefly revived in the body of Lister because she had the authority to stop the ship's self-destruct sequence.

BULLET, JAKE**FIRST APPEARANCE** "BACK TO REALITY" (SERIES V)

Traffic cop alter ego of Kryten in an hallucination created by the Despair Squid.



Kryten goes on a date with the *real* Camille.

C**CAMILLE****FIRST APPEARANCE** "CAMILLE" (SERIES IV)

Perception-bending pleasure GELF who appears to onlookers as the sexual partner they most desire. In reality, green and blobby.

CARMEN, CAROLINE**FIRST APPEARANCE** "EPIDEME" (SERIES VII)

Former Red Dwarf crewmember who was reposted just before the Red Dwarf radiation leak. She later contracted the zombie virus epideme which, millions of years later, she spread to Lister after her frozen body was brought aboard Starbug.

CAT PRIEST**FIRST APPEARANCE** "WAITING FOR GOD" (SERIES I)

A blind feline priest of the Red Hat faction left behind on Red Dwarf with Cat when all the other cats built their own arks and bugged

off, leaving the ill and frail and useless behind.

CHARLES, CRAIG**FIRST APPEARANCE** "BACK TO EARTH, PART III"

Soap star the Dwarfers meet on 21st century Earth who looks uncannily like Lister.

CHEN**FIRST APPEARANCE** "THE END" (SERIES I)

One of Lister, Petersen and Selby's drinking buddies on Red Dwarf before the radiation leak. Later recreated by Nanobots. ➔



CONFIDENCE

FIRST APPEARANCE "CONFIDENCE AND PARANOIA" (SERIES I)

A physical manifestation of Lister's confidence; he looked like the manager of the London Jets and had the voice of quiz show host Bing Baxter.



CRANE, NIRVANA
FIRST APPEARANCE "HOLOSHIP" (SERIES V)

Flight commander on the Holoship

who looked like she was heading for a relationship with Rimmer until she was chosen as the hologram switched off to accommodate him.

CRAWFORD

FIRST APPEARANCE "TROJAN" (SERIES X)

A psychopathic sim who killed everyone else on her ship, then used the ship's hologram (based on Rimmer's brother Howard) to trick her way on board Red Dwarf.



CREATOR, THE

FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK TO EARTH, PART III"

The man who created the *Red Dwarf* television show in the television show.



DENNIS "DUNGO" THE GARDENER
FIRST MENTION "THE BEGINNING" (SERIES X)

Rimmer's secret real father after his promiscuous mother decided to go all DH Lawrence with the gardener.

DESPAIR SQUID

FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK TO REALITY" (SERIES V)

Huge oceanic creature whose ink causes hallucinations that lead to suicide.

DIBBLEY, DUANE

FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK TO REALITY" (SERIES V)

Buck-toothed, plastic-sandal wearing version of Cat that was created in the Despair Squid-induced hallucination.



DOG, THE

FIRST APPEARANCE "PARALLEL UNIVERSE" (SERIES II)

Cat's sloppy alternate self in a matriarchal alternate reality.



DOYLE, BILLY

FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK TO REALITY" (SERIES V)

Rimmer's Despair Squid-induced alter ego – unsuccessful half-brother of...

DOYLE, SEBASTIAN

FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK TO REALITY" (SERIES V)

Identity assumed by Lister in the hallucination caused by a Despair Squid – a fascist leader responsible for the deaths of thousands of people.



ECH-ECH-ECH-ECH-ECH-ECH-ECH
FIRST APPEARANCE "EMOHAWK" (SERIES VI)

Best-looking daughter of the chief of the the Kinitawowi GELF (Genetically Engineered Life Form) tribe, whom the chief wanted married off to Lister. Well, they did share the same star sign – Aries.

EDGINGTON, IRENE**FIRST APPEARANCE** "ENTANGLED"
(SERIES X)

Lead scientist at the Erroneous Reasoning Research Academy [ERRA]. Inventor of the groinal exploder, whose experiments also devolved her into a chimpanzee.

**FRANKENSTEIN****FIRST APPEARANCE** "THE END"
(SERIES I)

Lister's cat, who survived the radiation leak in Red Dwarf and became the progenitor of the super-evolved cat race onboard the ship.

**GARRETT, TALIA****FIRST APPEARANCE** "ONLY THE GOOD..."
(SERIES VIII)

A "friend" of Captain Hollister's who survives the destruction of the Hermes, but her escape pod introduces a highly corrosive chameleonic micro-organism to Red Dwarf.

GREAT ONE, THE**FIRST APPEARANCE** "RIMMERWORLD"
(SERIES VI)

King of Rimmerworld, a planet of Rimmer clones.

GRIM REAPER, THE**FIRST APPEARANCE** "ONLY THE GOOD..."
(SERIES VIII)

Rimmer kicked him in the balls when Red Dwarf was about to be destroyed... again. May have actually been a hallucination caused by concussion.

**HOLLISTER, CAPTAIN FRANK****FIRST APPEARANCE** "THE END"
(SERIES I)

Long-suffering, US-born commanding officer of Red Dwarf at the time of the radiation leak that killed everyone on board except Lister. Later resurrected by Nanobots.

**HARRISON****FIRST APPEARANCE** "HOLOSHIP"
(SERIES V)

Replacement hologram for Rimmer, when Rimmer left to join the Holoship. After living with Cat, Lister and Kryten for a while she asked to be switched off, saying she appreciated death more now.

HIGHS, THE**FIRST APPEARANCE** "DEMONS AND ANGELS" (SERIES V)

Alternative versions of the Red Dwarf crew created by the triplicator who exemplify all the best qualities of their originals. More pleasant than the Lows.

HILLY**FIRST APPEARANCE** "PARALLEL UNIVERSE" (SERIES II)

Female version of Holly in an alternate matriarchal reality – became the blueprint for Holly's head sex change in season three.

**HOGGY THE ROGUEY****FIRST APPEARANCE** "THE BEGINNING"
(SERIES X)

Easily bored rogue droid and petty thief who's plagued Red Dwarf on a number of occasions and liked to challenge people to duels across space and time.

**HOLDEN, FRED "THICKIE"****FIRST APPEARANCE** "TIMESLIDES"
(SERIES III)

Schoolmate of Rimmer's at Io House who invented the Tension Sheet. (Sort of... he overheard future Rimmer telling young Rimmer to paint some bubble-wrap red and patent it.) ➔

HUDZEN-10

FIRST APPEARANCE "THE LAST DAY"
(SERIES III)

Upgrade mechanoid sent to Red Dwarf by DivaDroid International to replace Kryten.

HECTOR

FIRST APPEARANCE "CAMILLE"
(SERIES IV)

Green, blobby boyfriend of Camille.



INQUISITOR, THE

FIRST APPEARANCE "THE INQUISITOR"
(SERIES V)

Simulant who reached the end of time and discovered there was in fact no god. Created the Time Gauntlet and made it his duty to visit each and every person throughout time and space to judge whether they're worthy of existence.



JESUS OF CAESAREA

FIRST APPEARANCE "LEMONS"
(SERIES X)

A guy who the Dwarfers mistook for Jesus of Nazareth while in India in 23AD.



KENNEDY, JOHN FITZGERALD

FIRST APPEARANCE "TIKKA TO RIDE"
(SERIES VII)

35th president of the United States whom the Dwarfers accidentally saved from assassination – that might sound like a good thing but it cocked up the timeline mightily.



LANSTROM, HILDEGARD

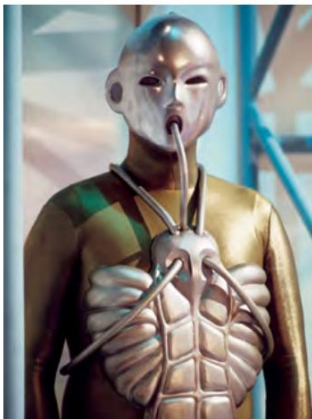
FIRST APPEARANCE "QUARANTINE"
(SERIES V)

Space Corps scientist and hologram who contracted a holovirus that drove her insane.

LEGION

FIRST APPEARANCE "LEGION"
(SERIES VI)

A synthetic life form that creates a gestalt personality from those it is currently in contact with. Also created the hard-light technology that allowed Rimmer to become a "solid" hologram.



LENNON

FIRST APPEARANCE "FUTURE ECHOES"
(SERIES I)

One of Lister's robot goldfishes, along with McCartney.

LISTER, BEXLEY

FIRST APPEARANCE "FUTURE ECHOES"
(SERIES I)

Along with Jim, one of the twin sons of Dave Lister and Deb Lister. (In an alternate universe they're the twin sons of Kristine Kochanski and Spanners.)

LISTER, DEB

FIRST APPEARANCE "PARALLEL UNIVERSE" (SERIES II)

Female version of Lister in a matriarchal alternative universe. "Father" of Jim and Bexley Lister.



©BBC



McINTYRE, GEORGE

FIRST APPEARANCE "THE END"
(SERIES I)

Flight co-ordinator on Red Dwarf who died shortly before the disastrous radiation leak and became the ship's hologram. Terrible at speeches but well liked.

McGRUDER, YVONNE

FIRST APPEARANCE "BETTER THAN LIFE" (SERIES II)

Red Dwarf female boxing champion who was Rimmer's only

sexual encounter (and even then, only once) in his life before holo-existence. The whole experience lasted 12 minutes including the time taken to eat the pizza afterwards.



MAMET, PROFESSOR
FIRST APPEARANCE "PSIRENS" (SERIES VI)

Divadroid engineer who created the 4000

range as a parody of John Warburton, the fiancé who jilted her before her wedding. Appeared as a Psiren-created hallucination.

MELLIE
FIRST APPEARANCE "DIMENSION JUMP" (SERIES IV)

Secretary to Admiral Sir James "Bongo" Tranter in Ace Rimmer's original dimension. Offered to smear herself in maple syrup for Ace. Looks like Holly.

MR FLIBBLE
FIRST APPEARANCE "QUARANTINE" (SERIES V)

Rimmer's penguin hench-puppet when he contracts a holo-virus and turns evil.

MULHOLLAND-JONES, SABRINA
FIRST APPEARANCE "TIMESLIDES" (SERIES III)

Model, bestselling novelist and international jetsetter. Lister's wife in the reality where he invented the Tension Sheet and became very rich.

MUTTON VINDALOO BEAST
FIRST APPEARANCE "DNA" (SERIES IV)

Creature created by a DNA machine and a curry. Defeated by lager.



NEWTON, DR KAREN
FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK IN THE RED, PART I" (SERIES VIII)

Chief medical officer on Red Dwarf at the time of the radiation leak, and then when the nanobots recreated it. Once slept with Rimmer but it wasn't her fault (he was using a sex virus at the time).

NODDY
FIRST APPEARANCE "BACK TO EARTH, PART II"

Sci-fi shop owner and geek on 21st century Earth who believes the Dwarfers when they say they're from the future.



OSWALD, LEE HARVEY
FIRST APPEARANCE "TIKKA TO RIDE" (SERIES VII)

Would-be assassin of John F Kennedy until the Dwarfers blunder in and ruin his aim.



PADRE
FIRST APPEARANCE "DIMENSION JUMP" (SERIES IV)

A chaplain at the Mimas test base in Ace Rimmer's origin universe, who looks remarkably like the Cat.

PARANOIA
FIRST APPEARANCE "CONFIDENCE AND PARANOIA" (SERIES I)

Physical manifestation of Lister's paranoia.

PETE
FIRST APPEARANCE "PETE, PART I" (SERIES VIII)

A sparrow who died and became a T-Rex. Then recovered.

PETERSEN, OLAF
FIRST APPEARANCE "THE END" (SERIES I)

Danish catering officer on Red Dwarf and one of Dave Lister's best drinking buddies.

PLATINI, HERCULE
FIRST APPEARANCE "HOLOSHIP" (SERIES V)

Captain of the Holoship.

PREE
FIRST APPEARANCE "FATHERS AND SONS" (SERIES X)

A replacement computer interface for Red Dwarf. She came with a "predictive" facility; Pree could carry out your orders before you'd given them.



QUEEG
FIRST APPEARANCE "QUEEG" (SERIES II)

Allegedly Red Dwarf's scary, authoritarian back-up computer, but actually a jape dreamt up by Holly to teach his ungrateful crew a lesson.



RACHEL
FIRST APPEARANCE "TIMESLIDES" (SERIES III)

Rimmer's blow-up doll – she later appears in "Stoke Me A Clipper" at Rimmer's funeral. ➔



RIMMER, ACE

FIRST APPEARANCE "DIMENSION JUMP" (SERIES IV)

What a guy. Multi-universally loved heroic version of Arnold J Rimmer from an alternate reality. May have liked kippers.

ARLENE RIMMER

FIRST APPEARANCE "PARALLEL UNIVERSE" (SERIES II)

Female version of Rimmer in the parallel universe where the sexes are swapped.



RIMMER, FRANK

FIRST APPEARANCE "POLYMORPH" (SERIES III)

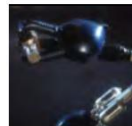
One of Rimmer's three brothers. Joined Space Corps. Eventually became a hologram. His dark secret is... he never rose higher than a vending machine repair man.



SELBY

FIRST APPEARANCE "THE END" (SERIES I)

One of Lister, Olaf Petersen and Chen's drinking buddies on Red Dwarf before the radiation leak. Later recreated by Nanobots.



SKUTTERS

FIRST APPEARANCE "THE END" (SERIES I)

Claw-headed

service droids on Red Dwarf. The Dwarfers have given them various nicknames over time; Bob and Madge, Stabbim, El Skutto, Pinky and Perky among them. When Rimmer was still intangible he taught them to play the Hammond organ.

SNACK DISPENSERS 23 AND 34

FIRST APPEARANCE "DEAR DAVE" (SERIES X)

Two AI vending machines who become involved in a love triangle with Lister.

SPANNERS

FIRST APPEARANCE "DIMENSION JUMP" (SERIES IV)

Ace-universe version of Dave Lister; he's a successful engineer and married to console officer Kristine Kochanski.

SMEG AND THE HEADS**FIRST APPEARANCE** "TIMESLIDES" (SERIES III)

Lister's teenage band, best known for "The Om Song".

SPEED, JIM BEXLEY**FIRST APPEARANCE** "FUTURE ECHOES" (SERIES I)

Lister's favourite Zero Gravity Footballer, Speed played for the London Jets. Lister named his twin sons after him.

STUPID, CLOISTER THE**FIRST APPEARANCE** "WAITING FOR GOD" (SERIES I)

The cats' god, who was frozen in time. Lister is convinced it's him; Cat's not so sure when Lister fails to turn his food into a woman.

SWALLOW**FIRST APPEARANCE** "BACK TO EARTH, PART II"

A prop maker who worked on Red Dwarf who stole many of the props after the show ended and sold them on eBay. He helps the Dwarfers find the Creator.

T**TALKIE TOASTER****FIRST APPEARANCE** "FUTURE ECHOES" (SERIES I)

AI toaster who irritates everyone by constantly offering them hot, buttered, bread-based consumables. His motto is, "I toast therefore I am."

TODHUNTER, FRANK**FIRST APPEARANCE** "THE END" (SERIES I)

Second in command on Red Dwarf, and the man who puts Lister in Stasis.

TRANTER, ADMIRAL SIR JAMES "BONGO"**FIRST APPEARANCE** "DIMENSION JUMP" (SERIES IV)

Ace Rimmer's boss in the original Ace-dimension. Oversaw Project: Wildfire at the Mimas test base. Would have buttered his bread on the other side if Ace had asked.

U**UNSPEAKABLE ONE, THE****FIRST APPEARANCE** "TERRORFORM" (SERIES V)

A manifestation of Rimmer's self-loathing created by the Psi-Moon.

V**VOORHESE, CAPTAIN HAUPTMANN MEINHARD****FIRST APPEARANCE** "STOKE ME A CLIPPER" (SERIES VII)

Arch nemesis of Ace Rimmer. A Nazi officer on a parallel universe Earth, he murdered his own family, wore a monocle and had a pet crocodile that went by the name of Snappy.

W**WARBURTON, JOHN****FIRST APPEARANCE** "BEYOND A JOKE" (SERIES VII)

Bio-engineer for DivaDroid International; a real buffoon of a man who was pompous, foolish and quick to anger. His disgruntled fiancée, Professor Mamet, designed the 4000 series to be a parody of him.

WEDNESDAY, CHANCELLOR**FIRST APPEARANCE** "THE BEGINNING" (SERIES X)

Chancellor of the Simulant Generals; answerable to Dominator Zlurth. Once eviscerated himself after a misunderstanding with his boss, but recovered.

**Y****YATES, LISA****FIRST APPEARANCE** "THANKS FOR THE MEMORY" (SERIES II)

An old flame of Lister's from his Liverpool days. They had an intense and passionate affair, the memory of which Lister "shared" with Rimmer.

Z**ZLURTH, DOMINATOR****FIRST APPEARANCE** "THE BEGINNING" (SERIES X)

Leader of the Simulant Generals, who regards the other generals as toadying yes men who deserve his contempt. Main ambition in life to kill the last human, Lister. 

BEYOND THE JOKES

It's very funny, but *Red Dwarf's* sci-fi is also as clever as *Star Trek's*, argues Richard Edwards

We all know that *Red Dwarf* is funny. In fact, if you were to pull Rimmer, Lister, Kryten and the Cat out of outer space and dump them on planet Earth, you'd still have a pretty good sitcom – albeit one where only one of the lead characters is actually human. It even follows quite a common sitcom set-up. You know the one: take four or five people/cats/mechanoids/computers (delete as appropriate) who really shouldn't ever be in a room together – and then force them to live in close proximity, with no chance of escape. It's a successful recipe that also applies to *Father Ted*, *Porridge*, *Fawlty Towers* and plenty more.

But there's something else going on with *Red Dwarf* – it's totally unconventional in the way it manages to be both a sitcom and a very clever sci-fi show, with

those two sides of its make-up existing in perfect quantum entanglement. You can look at it as both a comedy in a sci-fi setting, or a sci-fi show with lots of gags.

Yet crucially, it's not a spoof of science fiction – arguably the “easier” way to make a genre comedy – and doesn't make fun of its unashamedly high concept situations. Instead, it takes *really* clever sci-fi ideas and uses them as an excuse to put its characters (all brilliant sitcom creations) into situations where they do and say really funny things – just because those situations are sometimes silly and often played for laughs doesn't make them any less smart.

Red Dwarf established its sci-fi credentials right from the beginning (or “The End”, if you're being pedantic). Not only did it kill off all but one of the ship's crew – imagine a drama



The after-effects of Deep Sleep.

with the balls to do that! – but it made his only companions a *holographic* version of his dead roommate (who, because this is a sitcom, he happens to despise); a genius computer (with the dry, laconic manner of a stand-up comedian); and a human-like

Lemons: they should be a key component of *any* time travel device.



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“For intelligence of ideas, *Red Dwarf* even gives *Star Trek: The Next Generation* a run for its money – and it’s a lot funnier”

descendant of his pet cat (who happens to have a great love for fashion *and* talk English fluently). That final human spent *three million years* in a “stasis field” where time stood still – just to reiterate, that’s **THREE MILLION YEARS**, a timescale that would give even Doctor Who heart(s) palpitations. Over that time, that one cat has spawned an entire civilisation, devoted to the slightly misinterpreted “religious teachings” of the aforementioned final human. Make no mistake,

this is hard science fiction territory – and just because *Red Dwarf* has fun with it doesn’t make it any less ingenious.

For intelligence of ideas, *Red Dwarf* even gives *Star Trek: The Next Generation* a run for its money – and in the humour stakes, *Red Dwarf* was always light years ahead. Both were their respective countries’ TV sci-fi standard bearers in the early ’90s, and both motored through bold, ingenious premises at warp speed. That *Red Dwarf*

A particularly attractive GELF.



was doing so on a budget a mere fraction of the mega-bucks thrown at *Star Trek* makes it even more impressive – proof that sci-fi is the genre of ideas as much as spectacle.

Over its 61 episodes, *Red Dwarf* has played around with time travel, time loops, virtual reality, parallel universes, quantum ➔

We can't imagine
a better place to
play golf.



“Back when *The Matrix* was still on a floppy disc in the Wachowskis’ PC, *Red Dwarf* used virtual reality for some memorable episodes”

entanglement, justice fields, nanotechnology, AI, mechanoids, time-spewing white holes and is the only show we’re aware of where a lead character is actually his own father. It’s also built its own mythology of a post-humanity universe populated by the likes of GELFs and Simulants.

This is the stuff great science fiction is made of – and when you have someone as eloquent as Kryten to help you through the complicated bits, it’s a pleasure to be a part of that world. Someone get him and Data in a room for a natter – we have a feeling they’d get on...

NOW, HERE ARE EIGHT OF *RED DWARF*’S COOLEST SCI-FI CONCEPTS...

VIRTUAL REALITY

Back when *The Matrix* was still sitting on a floppy disc in the Wachowskis’ PC, *Red Dwarf* used virtual reality to create some of its most memorable episodes like “Better Than Life” and “Gunmen Of The Apocalypse”. For a few brief moments we even believed the whole show was actually a total-immersion videogame – until it was revealed to be a Despair Squid-induced hallucination.

HARD LIGHT

Bringing back dead crew members as holograms, unable to touch anything, is a wonderful idea in itself, but to later give Rimmer physical form via Legion’s “hard” modification to his light bee took it to another level. *Star Trek*’s holodecks played with the properties of light in similar ways, but never put it quite so eloquently. It’s light! It’s hard! (And it’s so plausible that real-life scientists are actually working on turning light into a solid.)

PARALLEL UNIVERSES

A sci-fi staple, yes, but *Red Dwarf* has always played the mirror universe card superbly. From the female-centric universe encountered in “Parallel Universe” to a timeline where Arnold

An alternative dimension that looks a lot like home...



©UKTV

Rimmer grew up to be the bravest man in existence, *Red Dwarf* was dabbling in the “many worlds” interpretation of quantum physics decades before *Fringe* got in on the act.

THE JUSTICE FIELD

Existing in that sweet spot where genius and sublime silliness collide, the Justice Zone is one of *Red Dwarf*'s greatest creations. A prison where any crime you attempt to commit is immediately transferred to you instead? We have no idea how it would work, but it's a wonderful premise. And the automated shoes that guide the Dwarfers around the Justice Zone are hilarious.

QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT

The idea of quantum entanglement – where two particles on opposite sides of the universe can interact with each other – is on the out-there end of real-world physics. *Red Dwarf* played the concept to hilarious effect in Series X episode

“Entangled” – and gave Danny John-Jules and Robert Llewellyn to show off some amazing in-synch acting skills.

WHITE HOLE

What's the opposite of a black hole? Obviously it's an entity that spews time and matter back into space. Yes, this is mostly an excuse for gags about time repeating itself – “what is it?” – but it also skirts surprisingly close to actual scientific theories. And “white hole” sounds much more appealing than *Star Trek*'s many “subspace anomalies”.

RELIGION AND THE AFTERLIFE

The way Fiji and Lister turn into the promised land of Fuchal and spiritual icon Cloister over three million years of Cat evolution is a very clever satire of organised religion. Kryten's belief in a Silicon Heaven is also rather sweet – though its origins (human overlords programmed the idea of an afterlife into



The Dwarfers at their best.



Camille shows Kryten his ideal woman.



A match made in a parallel universe.

machines to keep them servile) are actually rather sinister. Presumably those programmers now create software that resides in Silicon Hell...

LISTER'S PARENTAGE

A crazy premise that ties your head in more knots than Dave Lister's personal family tree – thanks to some timey-wimey stuff, he's his own dad. The grandfather paradox is a doddle to understand next to this one. 

MARKET SPACE

Check out the new wave of *Red Dwarf* merchandise

STUFF TO BUY!

Back in the early '90s, we all knew someone who owned a *Red Dwarf* t-shirt, whether it featured Ace Rimmer and that famous fishy catchphrase, or Dave Lister imploring us to "get out there and twat it". So merchandise has always been a big part of the *Dwarf* experience – and now, for the first time in 10 years (and just in time for series XI), new official merch is heading our way from 15 September.

The range (produced by Matrix) will include a *Red Dwarf* baseball cap, t-shirts, badges, a tote bag, a hoodie, a keyring and more. "I'm really looking forward to working with Matrix developing some official merchandise for the fans," says *Red Dwarf* co-creator (and writer/director of series XI) Doug Naylor. "For too long pirate merchandise has ruled the waves. No more, me hearties! I'm also thrilled to be working with GameDigits on a *Red Dwarf* XI game. If I get time between playing it to release it, *Red Dwarf* fans might get to play it too."



Just don't spill the contents of your mug of any of your t-shirts...

Find out more at www.shop.reddwarf.co.uk

You won't be able to blame any space mishaps on Rimmer.



STUFF TO PLAY!

There's also a new *Red Dwarf* game coming to mobile and tablets. Players get the chance to take command of Red Dwarf and control Starbug – the main aim of the game is to explore further and further into deep space, with the help of the crew. (The more you

play the further you go; the more energy you gain to upgrade your ship, the faster you travel.)

There are also extra sub-games featuring characters and locations the crew will encounter in series XI, and there'll also be the chance to compete against other players via an online

leaderboard charting how far they've travelled. And the game won't just be limited to what you get on launch – extra content will be added in later via free updates and in-app purchases.

The new *Red Dwarf* game is coming to mobile and tablets from Thursday 22 September. 🚀

10 MUST-SEE EPISODES

Dave Golder picks out some of *Red Dwarf*'s most essential stories

Important disclaimer: we're not saying *best* here

– doing that would be enough to incite conflicts on the scale of the holy wars fought by the cat people over the colour of the hats in Fuchal. (Our money's on red.)

Instead, this is a set of episodes we'd give to a visitor from an alternative dimension as a top quality cross-section of *Red Dwarf*'s 61 episodes. So in chronological order...

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

Series II



The plot When Lister secretly gives Rimmer his memories of an old relationship, the entire crew suffers the fall-out.

Why it's great Long before *Eternal*

Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind got Jim Carrey's mind in a twist, *Red Dwarf* came up with a very similar idea. The revelation about Rimmer's false memories is actually only uncovered late on in an episode bursting with invention, and plotted like a mystery: just why have the crew lost four days' worth of memories and why do both Lister and Cat have plaster casts on their legs?

Best moment Rimmer waking up with the sudden belief that he was once a sex god... who moved to Liverpool for reasons he can't quite fathom



QUEEG

Series II

The plot Holly's continued incompetence leads to the ship's computer being upgraded to the seriously scary Queeg, who makes the crew's life hell.

Why it's great Amazingly the only Holly-centric episode in the show's entire history, as the laconic computer gets his own back on his ungrateful crew. His "replacement" – played by Charles Augins with a stare so intense it could melt mountains – is a wonderful creation, prompting some great reactions from the rest of the cast.

Best moment The punchline to the episode – SPOILER ALERT!!! SPOILER ALERT!!! – in which Holly reveals he's created Queeg to teach his unappreciative crew a lesson. April, May, June, July and August fool, indeed.



MAROONED

Series III

The plot When Lister and Rimmer become marooned after Starbug crashes on an ice planet, Rimmer tries to convince Lister he must sacrifice his beloved guitar to keep the fire going.

Why it's great This is the kind of episode you usually dread in a sci-fi drama – the cheap one where two characters are forced to bond but nothing bloody happens. But when the two characters are brilliant comedy creations, the resulting head-to-heads are pure gold. Constantly, often painfully, funny.

Best moment Rimmer and Lister discussing losing their virginity: “You did it on a golf course and you weren’t a member? You didn’t pay any green fees or anything?”

THE LAST DAY

Series III

The plot Kryten is ordered to shut himself down and be replaced by a new model.

Why it's great The episode that introduced the concept of Silicon Heaven, “The Last Day” is superbly crafted, with a whole series of spot-on setpieces: Kryten learning his fate; Lister throwing him a goodbye party; the new mechanoid arriving and discovering a hostile welcome party.

Best moment The advertisement for the Hudzen-10 in which the new mechanoid proves his impressive strength by karate-chopping a brick with something he unzips from his pelvic area.

“The Last Day’ is superbly crafted, with a whole series of spot-on setpieces”

Not a really big belly button...



DIMENSION JUMP

Series IV

The plot Ace Rimmer – a heroic version of Arnold J from another reality – jumps into our universe and rescues the Dwarfers when Starbug crashes, much to “our” Rimmer’s annoyance.

Why it’s great Ace’s “what a guy” persona could easily have descended into caricature, but here there’s a humanity and depth to the most heroic man in the universe – he seems genuinely sad to see what has become of his other self. That’s not to say it’s not funny, however: the spoofy opening in Ace’s Dan Dare-verse – where both men and women offer to place their bodies at his lunchtime disposal – is just plain hilarious. Smoke him a kipper, he’ll be back for breakfast.

Best moment The whole story hinges around the decision that made Ace’s life go in a certain direction and Arnold’s another, and there’s a twist revelation that manages to be both funny and not a little heartbreaking.

What a guy.



QUARANTINE

Series V

The plot A pissed-off Rimmer invokes Space Corps Directives to force Cat, Lister and Kryten into a three-month quarantine in cramped quarters.

Why it’s great It’s another of those “characters forced into close confinement, talking pish” affairs that *Red Dwarf* does so well, with added lunacy: a cross-dressing, murderous Rimmer going completely cuckoo and babbling about the King of the Potato People. Let’s not even go into how the luck virus plays into all this.

Best moment Rimmer in a gingham dress, introducing his pals to his new friend – demonic penguin hand puppet, Mr Flibble.

BACK TO REALITY

Series V

The plot The crew discover they’ve been playing a *Red Dwarf* virtual reality game for the past four years.

Why it’s great Not just great *Red Dwarf* but great TV sci-fi, full stop – who’d have thought that an opening act featuring the crew’s demise on Starbug would have led to one of the show’s very best half-hours? It shifts effortlessly from tragedy (the Dwarfers are *useless* at being themselves) to slapstick (a wonderfully daft sequence where Lister, Rimmer, Kryten and the Cat play out a car chase on packing crates), and it gave us Duane Dibbley – a dorky, fashion-challenged version of the Cat for whom the history of television will forever be thankful.

Best moment Timothy Spall’s wonderfully smug game attendant, Andy, tells the crew everything they missed – including Lister getting together with Kochanski and jump-starting the second Big Bang. No wonder they only scored 4%...



GUNMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Series VI

The plot When Kryten shuts himself down so his circuits can concentrate on creating an antivirus programme, the others try to communicate with him using a Western-themed computer game as an interface.

Why it's great This one won an international Emmy Award, and it's not hard to see why. Making the most of its *Star Trek* holodeck-style gimmick, it's huge, silly fun from beginning to end, from Lister's rather unsavoury addiction to a film noir VR game to Starbug riding off into the sunset.

Best moment There's a bonkers bar room brawl in which the Dwarfers use their computer game characters' skills – Rimmer can now throw a punch!



©NOBBY CLARK/ARENAPAL

“Making the most of its *Star Trek* holodeck-style gimmick, it's huge, silly fun”

TIKKA TO RIDE

Series VII



The plot In an epic search for curry resupplies, the boys from

the Dwarf time travel to 20th century Earth and accidentally prevent the assassination of John F Kennedy.

Why it's great There comes a time in every SF show's life when it gives its own spin on the Kennedy assassination. Only *Red Dwarf* ever decided that it's Kennedy who shot Kennedy. Surprisingly, while this is the main hook of the episode it's a full 15 minutes before there's any time travel. Before that the episode has an extended hymn in praise of curry culture. "I've only got two taste buds that work!" wails Lister. "I NEED curry." And his anecdote about a vindaloo-hijacked date is a beaut: "So you didn't get off with her?" asks Cat. "The only thing I got off was the loo about six hours later," explains Lister.

Best moment JFK: "You mean... assassinate myself?" Lister: "Yeah, it'll drive the conspiracy nuts crazy."

FATHERS & SONS

Series X



©UKTV

The plot Lister – being his own dad thanks to timey-wimey stuff – tries to give himself some (alcohol-aided) tough love to make him grow up, while the rest of the crew has to contend with a new computer that has unsettling predictive capabilities.

Why it's great Even among the incredibly strong series X episodes, "Fathers & Sons" stands out as something special. Rarely has the show's gag rate been so consistent and so high. Lister's plot also has real heart; the kind of space angst that was so popular in the first couple of seasons. Plus there are running gags about Chinese whispers and a manic medibot that make you wonder how they packed so much in.

Best moment Lister watching the video messages from himself, and eventually realising that he's outsmarted himself good and proper when it turns out what he thinks is his guitar isn't actually his guitar at all. 

RED DWARF QUIZ

Test your smegging knowledge!

- 1 What are the names of Lister's twin sons?
- 2 What "E" is the sub-title of Series VI's "Polymorph II"?
- 3 Why is Jenna Russell important in the history of *Red Dwarf*?
- 4 What's the name of the device created by Holly that transports Red Dwarf to a parallel universe in "Parallel Universe"?
- 5 How does Camille, the pleasure GELF, appear to Cat?
- 6 What is Arnold Rimmer's middle name?
- 7 Name the blue shuttlecraft used by the Dwarfers in Series II.
- 8 Who connects *Red Dwarf* with *Cold Feet*?
- 9 Which actress played Nirvanah Crane, Rimmer's love interest in "Holoship"?



- 10 Which Dwarf is put on trial in the Justice Zone (above)?
- 11 Which *Frasier* star played Holly in one of the US *Red Dwarf* pilots?
- 12 Who (or what) are revealed to have stolen Red Dwarf in Series VII?
- 13 Name the princess rescued by Ace Rimmer in the opening sequence of "Stoke Me A Clipper".
- 14 Which of these *EastEnders* actors has *not* appeared in *Red Dwarf*? Anita Dobson, Jake Wood, Paul Bradley or Leslie Grantham.
- 15 Name the company who created Kryten.

- 16 What's the name of the *Felis sapiens*' promised land?
- 17 On which ship do Lister, Rimmer and the Cat first meet Kryten (bottom left)?
- 18 Which comedian was a warm-up act for *Red Dwarf*, as well as appearing in several episodes – including playing Caligula in "Meltdown"?
- 19 What does Lister use to kill the mutton vindaloo beast in DNA?
- 20 Which company owns Red Dwarf?



- 19 Lager 20 Jupiter Mining Corporation
- 16 Fruchal 17 Nova 5 18 Tony Hawks
- 15 DivaDroid International
- 12 The Nanobots 13 Bonjela 14 Leslie Horrocks 10 Rimmer 11 Jane Leeves
- David Marsden in *Cold Feet* 9 Jane played Todhunter in *Red Dwarf* and
- 7 Blue Midget 8 Robert Bathurst
- Hop Drive 5 As himself 6 Judas
- 3 She sang the theme tune 4 Holly
- 1 Jim and Bexley 2 "Emohawk"

ANSWERS



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